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AUTHOR Himmell, Rhoda; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This document consists of three units in which students study and compare the two civilizations of ancient Greece, that of the Greek kingdoms of the second millennium B.C. and the city states of historical Greece, and learn how historians use archaeological evidence to reconstruct the history of Mycenaean Greece. Suggestions are included for helping students appreciate one of the principal written sources for early Greek culture, the "Odyssey." The first unit "Bronze Age Civilization in the Aegean: Crete, Mycenae, and Troy ca. 2500-100 B.C." is a unit of study for grades 9-10. The purpose of this unit is to examine the origins, history, and culture of the earliest European civilizations at Crete and Mycenae with a focus on the archaeological evidence and examination of writing systems that link the two areas. Background for settlements on the island of Crete and on the Greek Peloponnese, key historic events, and a survey of the cultures of these areas are included. A discussion of both the mythological and archaeological sources for the Trojan War is provided in order to relate the Trojan War to the history of the Mycenaeans. The value of archaeology as the main source of information about the ancient period is emphasized. The second unit is "Homer's Odyssey: An Elementary Passion" for grades 1-6. This section contains selected activities for elementary students studying the "Odyssey." The third unit, "The Polis" is designed for grades 6-10. The purpose of this unit is to allow students to understand the function of the polis as an integral part of Greek life. Each unit contains references. (DK)

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THE ORIGINS OF GREEK CIVILIZATION: FROM THE BRONZE AGE TO THE POLIS ca. 2500 - 600 B.C.

By Rhoda Himmell
Amanda H. Podany
David Millstone
Peter Cheoros

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Death Mask of Agamemnon
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NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS
A Cooperative Research Program of the
University of California, Los Angeles
and the National Endowment for the Humanities

Linda Symcox, Project Developer & Series Editor
Amanda H. Podany & Stanley M. Burstein
Historical Consultants
Scott Waugh, Institute Director
Charlotte Crabtree, Director

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For information on additional teaching units and other resources from the Center, please write:

National Center for History in the Schools
University of California, Los Angeles
Moore Hall 231, 405 Hilgard Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90024-1521

APPROACH AND RATIONALE

By Linda Symcox

The National Center for History in the Schools has developed the following collection of lessons for teaching **The Origins of Greek Civilization: From the Bronze Age to the Polis ca. 2500-600 B.C.** Our units are the fruit of a year-long collaboration between history professors and experienced teachers of both United States and World History. They represent specific "**dramatic moments**" in history from which you and your students can pause to delve into the deeper meanings of selected landmark events and explore their wider context in the great historical narrative.

In our approach, the continuing narrative provides the context in which the dramatic moment is situated. By studying a crucial turning-point in history, the student becomes aware that choices had to be made by real human beings, that those decisions were the result of specific factors, and that they set in motion a series of historical consequences. We have selected dramatic moments that best bring alive that decision-making process. We hope that through this approach, your students will realize that history is an ongoing, open-ended process, and that the decisions they make today create the conditions of tomorrow's history.

Our dramatic moments are based on **primary sources**, taken from documents, artifacts, journals, diaries, newspapers and literature from the period under study. As you know, a primary source is a **first-hand** account of any event in history. For example, the telecast or the script of a speech would be a primary source. A secondary source is a **second-hand** account of an event. This would be, for example, the newspaper account of the speech the next day or a newscaster's report about the speech. All historical accounts, such as textbooks, are by their very nature secondary sources. What we hope to achieve using primary source documents in these lessons is to remove the distance that students feel from historical events and to connect them more intimately with the past. In this way we hope to re-create for your students a sense of "being there," a sense of seeing history through the eyes of the very people who were making decisions. This will help your students develop historical empathy, to realize that history is not an impersonal process divorced from real people like themselves. At the same time, by analyzing primary sources, students will actually practice the historian's craft, discovering for themselves how to analyze evidence, establish a valid interpretation and construct a coherent narrative in which all the relevant factors play a part.

CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

Within this unit, you will find: 1) **Teacher Background Materials** and 2) **Lesson Plans** with **Student Resources**. This unit, as we have said above, focuses on certain key moments in time and should be used as a supplement to your customary course materials. We have chosen to pitch the various lessons on different grade levels and they can usually be adapted to a slightly higher or lower level.

The **Teacher Background** section should provide you with a good overview of the entire unit and with the historical information and context necessary to link the specific **Dramatic Moment** to the larger historical narrative. You may consult it for your own use, and you may choose to share it with students if they are of a sufficient grade level to understand the materials.

The **Lesson Plans** include a variety of ideas and approaches for the teacher which can be elaborated upon or cut as you see the need. These lesson plans contain student resources which accompany each lesson. These resources consist of primary source documents, any handouts or student background materials, and in many cases, a bibliography for the unit.

In our series of teaching units, each collection can be taught in several ways. You can teach all of the lessons offered on any given topic, or you can select and adapt the ones that best support your particular course needs. We have not attempted to be comprehensive or prescriptive in our offerings, but rather to give you an array of enticing possibilities for in-depth study, at varying grade levels. We hope that you will find the lesson plans exciting and stimulating for your classes. We also hope that your students will never again see history as a boring sweep of inevitable facts and meaningless dates but rather as an endless treasure of real life stories, and an exercise in analysis and reconstruction, rather than rote memorization.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PACKAGE

By Stanley M. Burstein

"Anything new?" is the inevitable question people ask ancient historians in the expectation, of course, that there is nothing new to know about the musty ancient past. The actuality is different. Far from everything being known, ancient historians often feel their area of study is in constant flux and that textbooks are out of date almost before they are published, and for good reason. This is partly the result of historians exploring new subjects and using innovative methodologies. In the main, however, the excitement of the subject comes from the constant influx of new evidence thanks to the great expansion of the archaeological investigation of the great centers of ancient civilization that has made the nineteenth and especially the twentieth centuries the greatest period for the discovery of new sources for ancient history since the Renaissance. The continuing revision of historians' understanding of the early history of Greece and the origins of Greek civilization is a striking example of the impact these developments have had and continue to have on the writing of ancient history.

For over a millennium from its first appearance in the eighth century B.C. to its disappearance in the third century A.D. the polis or city state was the focus of Greek history and Greek life. From modern Afghanistan to eastern Spain, from southern Russia to North Africa, Greeks lived out their lives in almost fifteen hundred of these tiny urban centers. Each was a fiercely independent state with its own distinctive traditions and composed of a tightly knit community of citizens, adult males, sometimes as few as five hundred, rarely more than five thousand in number, who took an active role in all areas of the city's life from politics to religion. So much did Greeks take the polis system for granted that Aristotle could deny without fear of serious contradiction the capacity of the vast majority of humanity to live in freedom by defining man as a "political animal", that is, a polis animal.

Until the second half of the nineteenth century historians viewed the early history of Greece much the way the ancient Greeks did. According to this view, Greek history and Greek literature began in the ninth or eighth century B.C. with the almost simultaneous establishment of the first city states and the pubilcation of the two great epic poems, the Iliad and the Odyssey, written by the mysterious poet Homer with the aid of the recently borrowed Phoenician alphabet which had been adapted to write Greek. Before what was generally considered to be the earliest datable event in Greek history, the celebration of the first Olympic games in 776 B.C., all was legend, fitfully illuminated by the Homeric poems and other works of Greek literature but not susceptible to historical analysis. Like their Greek predecessors, however, the pioneers of modern Greek historiography never doubted that, if they could ever separate fact from fiction in the mass of Greek legend, they would discover earlier phases of the history of the classical Greek city states, not another and profoundly different form of Greek civilization as historians today believe was actually the case.

This dramatic change in historians' understanding of early Greek history is the result of over a century of remarkable archaeological achievements that began with the discovery in 1876 by the eccentric German archaeologist Heinrich Schliemann of the unlooted tombs of the sixteenth century B.C. kings of Mycenae which were filled with a rich and varied collection of weapons and art objects like none ever seen before in Greece. Five years earlier Schliemann had discovered at the site of Hisarlik in northwestern Turkey the remains of the city of Troy and raised the possibility that historical fact lay behind Homer's tales of the Trojan War. The scholarly revolution that had begun with Schliemann's discoveries at Troy and Mycenae continued with the discovery of yet another unknown civilization on the island of Crete by the English archaeologist Sir Arthur Evans in the first decade of the twentieth century together with hundreds of clay tablets written in several different scripts. One of these, a syllabic script historians call Linear B, which was also found at sites on the Greek mainland, the brilliant English amateur linguist Michael Ventris proved in 1951 to have been used to write an early form of Greek. Instead of living in city states like the historical Greeks, therefore, their second millennium B.C. ancestors were revealed to have inhabited a Greece divided into small kingdoms dominated by hilltop fortresses ruled by warrior kings with the aid of an administration composed of a small corps of literate scribes who tried to monitor all aspects of the kingdoms' economic life. Between the violent end of this first Greek civilization in about 1100 B.C. and the historical Greece of city states, stretched a little known four-hundred year period that historians call the Dark Ages and which holds the key to understanding the origins of classical Greek civilization. Attempting to find that key is one of the central tasks of contemporary Greek archaeology.

In these three units students will be able to study and compare the two civilizations of ancient Greece, that of the Greek kingdoms of the second millennium B.C. and the city states of historical Greece, and to learn how historians use archaeological evidence to reconstruct the history of Mycenaean Greece, while their teachers will find useful suggestions as to how to help their students appreciate one of the principal written sources for early Greek culture, the Odyssey.

UNIT TITLES

I. **Bronze Age Civilization in the Aegean: Crete, Mycenae, and Troy Ca. 2500 - 100 B.C.**
By Rhoda Himmell

II. **Homer's Odyssey: An Elementary Passion**
By David Millstone

III. **The Polis**
By Peter Cheoros

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS

BRONZE CIVILIZATION IN THE AEGEAN: CRETE, MYCENAE, AND TROY

ca. 2500 - 1100 B.C.

A UNIT OF STUDY FOR GRADES 9-10

Rhoda Himmel
Teacher Associate, NCHS
&
Amanda H. Podany
California State University, Pomona

Death Mask of Agamemnon
Illustrated by
Carole Collier Frick

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THE TROJAN WAR

For more than two thousand years people have told and re-told the stories of Homer, the blind Greek poet who is supposed to have lived about 800 B.C. These legends are of men and gods who roamed about performing great and heroic deeds. In a story attributed to Homer, the Greeks were able to capture the city of Troy by hiding soldiers in a huge, wooden horse that the Trojans foolishly pulled inside the walls of the their city.

Homer also told of a large and wealthy civilization on the island of Crete.

There is a land amid the wine-dark sea
Called Crete; rich, fruitful, girded by the waves,
She boasts unnumbered men and ninety towns.....
One city in extent the rest exceeds Knossos, (NAW-suhs) the city in which Minos (MY-nus) reigned

Ancient legend said that King Minos owned a ferocious beast called the Minotaur, with a bull's head and a man's body. He kept the Minotaur in a confusing network of passageways, called a labyrinth, or maze. As punishment for the killing of his son, King Minos demanded that every ninth year the Greek city of Athens send a tribute of seven boys and seven girls to Knossos to be devoured by the Minotaur. One year Theseus, son of the King of Athens, volunteered to go. But Aphrodite, the goddess of love, made King Minos' daughter Ariadne fall in love with Theseus. Ariadne gave Theseus a sword and a ball of string. With the sword he killed the Minotaur, and having attached the string to the door of the labyrinth, he rewound it and found his way out.

Until a little more than a century ago, Homer's stories of the Trojan War, Knossos and King Minos, as well as many other tales from ancient times, were regarded as myths and legends. No one knew for sure whether such a place as Troy had ever really existed. Few believed in the existence of King Minos or the fabulous city of Knossos.

One German schoolboy, Heinrich Schliemann, was fascinated by the tales and refused to believe that they were not true. Beginning life as an errand boy, he gradually earned a great fortune which made it possible for him to travel and investigate the truth of the Homeric legends. In 1870 he stood on a hilltop in Asia Minor near the Dardanelles Strait, where he believed Troy had once stood. In this unit we will discover, along with the archaeologists whose dedication and hard work produced great discoveries, whether these ancient stories have any factual basis and if the fabulous places described in Homer really existed.

I. UNIT OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

The purpose of this unit is to examine the origins, history and culture of the earliest European civilizations at Crete and Mycenae (my-SEE-nee) with a focus on the archaeological evidence and examination of writing systems that link the two areas.

Background for settlements on the island of Crete and on the Greek Peloponnese, key historic events, and a survey of the cultures of these areas will be included. In addition a discussion of both the mythological and archaeological sources for the Trojan War is provided in order to relate the Trojan War to the history of the Mycenaeans (my-suh-NEE-uns).

The study of the first European civilizations is essential in tracing the strands of the development of Western Civilization. Just as we view the history of classical Greece as our ancient history, the classical Greeks viewed the history of Mycenae and Crete as their own. Thus, a continuity of development may be appreciated from that period to the present. Study of the classical civilizations of both Greece and Rome rests upon the foundation of this earlier period.

Further, the value of archaeology as the main source of information about the ancient period is emphasized. In presenting this material, the archaeological sources are paramount.

The importance of early writing as a means of analyzing and interpreting the past is also of great value in developing this unit. Students will have the opportunity to simulate the same process of interpretation that archaeologists and historians have used to arrive at conclusions about the inter-relationships between the cultures studied.

II. UNIT CONTEXT

This unit logically follows the study of the earliest known civilizations in the Fertile Crescent and Egypt and precedes the study of the development of classic Greek civilization and Roman culture.

Students have previously identified the conditions necessary for advanced culture, i.e. agriculture, domestication of animals, dense settlements, writing, use of metals, political, religious and economic organization, specialization, representative art, etc.

It is useful to emphasize that the classical Greeks considered the Mycenaean period to be their ancient history and Homer to be its historian. Many references to the early civilization on Crete are also found in Homer.

III. UNIT OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the cross-cultural influences of early civilizations.

2. To appreciate the importance of archaeological sources in the study of the ancient period.

3. To have practice in archaeological interpretation based upon analysis of artifacts and other evidence.

4. To examine the process of cultural change through analysis of artifacts.

5. To identify some causes for the decline of early civilizations.

6. To reinforce the value of using primary source materials in gaining understanding of cultural institutions.

7. To gain practice in the skills of critical thinking.

8. To understand the value of myth and legend in the reconstruction of historical events and to be aware of the problems involved.

IV. INTRODUCTION TO "BRONZE AGE CIVILIZATION IN THE AEGEAN: TROY, MYCENAE, AND CRETE, ca. 2500 - ca. 1100 B.C."

By Amanda H. Podany

While Mesopotamian civilization was flourishing during the Bronze Age, other distinctive cultures were forming elsewhere in the world. Egyptian civilization was at its height along the Nile River at this time, and civilizations which were to shape their countries' futures blossomed in the Indus Valley in north-west India, in the Yellow River valley in China, in Anatolia (modern Turkey), and in the Aegean region. This was also the period during which the Hebrews came to be identified as a people, although it was not until the Iron Age that they established themselves in the Levant and began to have an impact on political history.

In this unit we turn to the Aegean region during the Bronze Age. The civilizations which flourished there, which we now know as Minoan and Mycenaean, constituted the "ancient history" of the Classical Greeks and were recalled by them in myths and epics which had profound influences on Greek culture. The influence can still be felt today. Whereas early Mesopotamian civilization was completely forgotten by later generations and had to be rediscovered by archaeologists, the civilizations of the Minoans and Mycenaeans were recalled in Greek mythology, which was never lost or forgotten but has been passed on from generation to generation right down to the present day.

The role of archaeologists in the Aegean initially was not to discover previously unsuspected cultures but to demonstrate the existence of cultures that had previously been dismissed as mythical. Archaeologists have shown that a great civilization did indeed exist on the island of

Crete, as legend had suggested. The Minoan civilization was centered around large administrative complexes or "palaces" (we cannot be certain whether they housed kings or queens because none of the scripts used by the Minoans has yet been deciphered), of which there were a number on the island. The elegant Minoan architectural style and abundant wall paintings have captivated the imagination of viewers ever since the first excavations on Crete, but our knowledge of the civilization there is limited. We do not know, for example, what type of government ruled the island, what the details of the religion may have been (although some aspects of the religion can be studied in the art work), even what language the people spoke. We do know that the civilization came to a somewhat abrupt end, around 1450 B.C., apparently as a result of the combined effects of natural disasters (earthquakes and the eruption of the nearby volcanic island of Thera) and invasion from the Greek mainland.

Greek-speaking Mycenaeans settled at the principal Minoan city of Knossos after catastrophes had crippled much of the rest of the island. They altered the last of the Minoan written scripts (Linear A) and fashioned it into a form more suitable for writing Greek (Linear B). Prior to their arrival in Crete, the Mycenaeans already had a thriving civilization on the Greek mainland, where the majority of the Greeks continued to live. The occupation of Crete was apparently brief (although there is considerable controversy on this point).

The Mycenaean civilization, in turn, came to an end over two and a half centuries after the demise of the Minoan civilization. The traditional date of the Trojan War lies in the closing years of the Mycenaean period, and the epic poem may represent a folk memory of a war in which the Greeks were involved at that time. Greeks of the Classical period recalled the Mycenaean period as a "Heroic Age" of men with super-human strength, great valor in battle, and a close relationship with the gods.

Some modern historians doubt that there was ever a Trojan war, but others believe evidence from the excavated site of Troy and from Mycenaean sites correlates closely enough with details given in Homer's *Iliad* to provide support for the historicity of the war. In this unit students are given a chance to analyze some of the evidence from which historians have drawn their conclusions. There is no right or wrong way of interpreting this evidence; we still do not know which of the archaeological levels at Troy represents the time of the Trojan War; we do not even know for certain whether the site of Hisarlik was in fact the city of Troy, as is commonly believed. This is one of the great puzzles of ancient history. For all the romance of the great legend of the Trojan War, for all the influence it had on Classical Greek culture, and for all the energy and expense devoted to the excavation and analysis of Troy, we do not know whether the Trojan War really happened.

V. LESSON PLANS

1. **The Minoan Civilization of Crete**
2. **Evaluating Evidence: The Decline of Minoan Civilization**
3. **Mycenae**
4. **The Trojan War: Causes**
5. **The Trojan War: Archaeology**

Notes to the Teacher

- Under the time constraints for most high school World History classes, the teacher may not be able to allocate a full school week to these topics. In that case, lessons one and two may be presented in a single class period.
- A second class period should be allotted to present lessons three, four, and five.
- The order of presentation of these topics is problematical. An approach based upon the order of archaeological discovery begins with Troy. Although this sequence provides great motivation by emphasizing the mythological and archaeological stories, it may result in some confusion on the part of students regarding the chronological order of the cultures. Therefore, we have used the chronological sequence of the development of civilization i.e. Crete, Mycenae, and Troy.

THE MINOAN CIVILIZATION ON CRETE

A. Objectives

1. To establish a geographic focus for the Bronze Age Aegean civilizations.
2. To understand the basic chronology of Minoan civilization.
3. To explore the nature of the ancient culture which flourished at several sites on the island of Crete.
4. To examine the archaeology of the Minoan sites with particular emphasis on the work of Sir Arthur Evans at Knossos.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Pass out **BACKGROUND MATERIALS,** and locate the Minoan, Mycenaean, and Trojan sites on a map. Students may be given the **WORKSHEET ONE** map exercise to do in class or for homework. This exercise requires students to locate the important cities of the Bronze Age as well as the later settlements of classical Greece and the surrounding area.
2. Distribute **STUDENT RESORCE : DOCUMENT A** and explain the chronology and terminology showing parallel development in Crete, Mycenae, and Troy.

C. Sample Questions for Discussion of Background Materials

1. What might have been the purpose for the tall jars in the store rooms ("magazines")?
2. Why did Sir Arthur Evans regard the clay tablets as the "crowning discovery" of his excavation?
3. Why did Evans believe that the palace of Knossos might have been the source of the legend of *King Minos and the Labyrinth?*
4. Look at the plan of the palace at Knossos. Is Evans right in describing it as a "maze"? What were the various rooms used for? (See Page 30.)

D. Evaluating the Lesson

Evaluation of this lesson may be combined with the follow-up lesson on Minoan writing and the decline of Minoan civilization. Some evaluation techniques which may be used in addition to or apart from traditional devices are projects (e.g. preparation of a newspaper; comparison of the methods of the archaeologists portrayed throughout the units; role-playing which could involve such figures as King Minos, Agamemnon, Achilles, or Sir Arthur Evans).

E. Resources

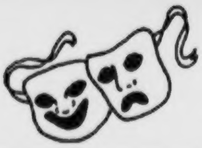
1. "The Search for The Trojan War," Part 2. This segment of the BBC six-part series about Troy is especially relevant for the study of the Minoans in that it brings together the mythology and archaeology at Troy, Mycenae, and Crete.

2. Commercial slides available for purchase.

3. Photographs which may be found in survey books about the art or archaeology of this period.

Minoan Vase
Illustrated by
Linda Symcox

A DRAMATIC MOMENT



"THE PALACE OF MINOS"

"The Palace was entered on the south-west side by a portico and double doorway opening from a spacious paved court. Flanking the portico were remains of a great fresco of a bull. . . .Along nearly the whole length of the building ran a spacious paved corridor, lined by a long row of fine stone doorways, giving access to a succession of magazines. On the floor of these magazines huge storage jars were still standing. . . . One of these jars, contained in a small separate chamber, was nearly five feet in height. . . .

"But manifold as were the objects of interest found within the palace walls of Knossos, the crowning discovery — or, rather, series of discoveries — remains to be told. On the last day of March, not far below the surface of the ground. . . there turned up a clay tablet of elongated shape, bearing on it incised characters in a linear script, accompanied by numeral signs. My hopes now ran high of finding entire deposits of clay archives, and they were speedily realized. . . .

"There can be little remaining doubt that this vast edifice, which in a broad historic sense we are justified in calling the 'Palace of Minos,' is one and the same as the traditional 'Labyrinth.' A great part of the ground plan itself, with its long corridors and repeated succession of blind galleries, its tortuous passages and spacious underground conduit, its bewildering system of small chambers, does in fact present many of the characteristics of a maze."

From Arthur Evans, "The Palace of Minos," in The Monthly Review, March 1901.

MINOAN CIVILIZATION

By Amanda H. Podany

The Aegean (ih-JEE-un) region, the setting of the Minoan (mih-NOH-un) and Mycenaean (my-shu-NEE-un) civilizations, consisted of the lands around the Aegean Sea and the islands between them. The largest of the Aegean islands is Crete, where the earliest civilization in this area, that of the Minoans, flourished between around 2000 and 1450 B.C. Later Mycenaean culture developed on the mainland of Greece and gradually spread throughout the Aegean between 1550 and 1200 B.C.

Throughout the Aegean, the climate is mild with enough rainfall for farmers to grow wheat and barley. Olives and grapes also grow particularly well in these regions; olive oil and wine have been important local products ever since ancient times. Not only were the olive oil and wine consumed by the immediate population, they could also be packed in large jars and traded abroad. The evidence for this trade is seen in the many pieces of Minoan and Mycenaean pottery that have been found in other lands bordering the Mediterranean, such as Syria and Egypt, and on the island of Cyprus.

Trade was important to the ancient people of the Aegean for a number of reasons. Although they were self-sufficient in most ways (their land produced enough food, lumber, and stone for the population), metal ores essential for the production of bronze had to be imported. Luxury goods like gold and most precious stones also came from foreign lands. Trade also must have brought the people of the Aegean into contact with the great civilizations of the Near East: those of the Egyptians, the Hittites, and the Mesopotamians.

In honor of the legendary Cretan king Minos, the name "Minoan" is used for the earliest Cretan civilization; we do not know by what name the Minoans referred to themselves or to their island. We do not even know what language they spoke, because we cannot read their writing. The language may have been related to that of the earliest men and women who arrived on Crete before 6000 B.C. from Anatolia (modern Turkey), who brought with them their domesticated plants and animals and who settled in small communities. More invaders may have arrived around 3000 B.C., after which the civilization developed, uninterrupted, until 1450 B.C. when it suffered a catastrophic change.

The Minoans lived in cities dominated by palaces. The largest of the palaces (of which there are at least four on the island) is that at Knossos (NAW-suhs). It was excavated by Sir Arthur Evans, an English archaeologist, in the early twentieth century. Each palace consisted of a large rectangular courtyard surrounded on all four sides by rooms: residence apartments, ceremonial halls, shrines, workshops, and many storerooms. The storerooms contained agricultural products probably collected from throughout the community. These products were then redistributed as rations to people dependent on the palace. Officials kept track of the goods entering and leaving the palaces by means of written documents. The earliest documents (from 2500 to around 1600 B.C.) were written in a pictographic script; later documents (from around 1775 to 1450 B.C.) were written in a script known as Linear A. Although neither of these scripts has been deciphered, historians can tell that most of the texts consist of lists of commodities.

During the last century of Minoan civilization, a new culture, that of the Mycenaeans, was flourishing on the Greek mainland (the Mycenaeans will be the topic of Lesson 3). The Mycenaeans and Minoans were clearly in contact with one another, for example we can see strong Minoan influences on Mycenaean artwork at this time, but initially they do not seem to have come into conflict.

MAP EXERCISE - THE ANCIENT GREEK WORLD

Place each of the following on your outline map in **CAPITAL LETTERS**

MEDITERRANEAN SEA
CRETE
AEGEAN SEA
IONIAN SEA
PELOPONNESUS
THRACE
MACEDONIA
CHALCIDICE
THESSALY
GULF OF CORINTH
BOEOTIA
EUBOEA
PERSIAN EMPIRE
ATTICA
MESSENIA
HELLESPONT

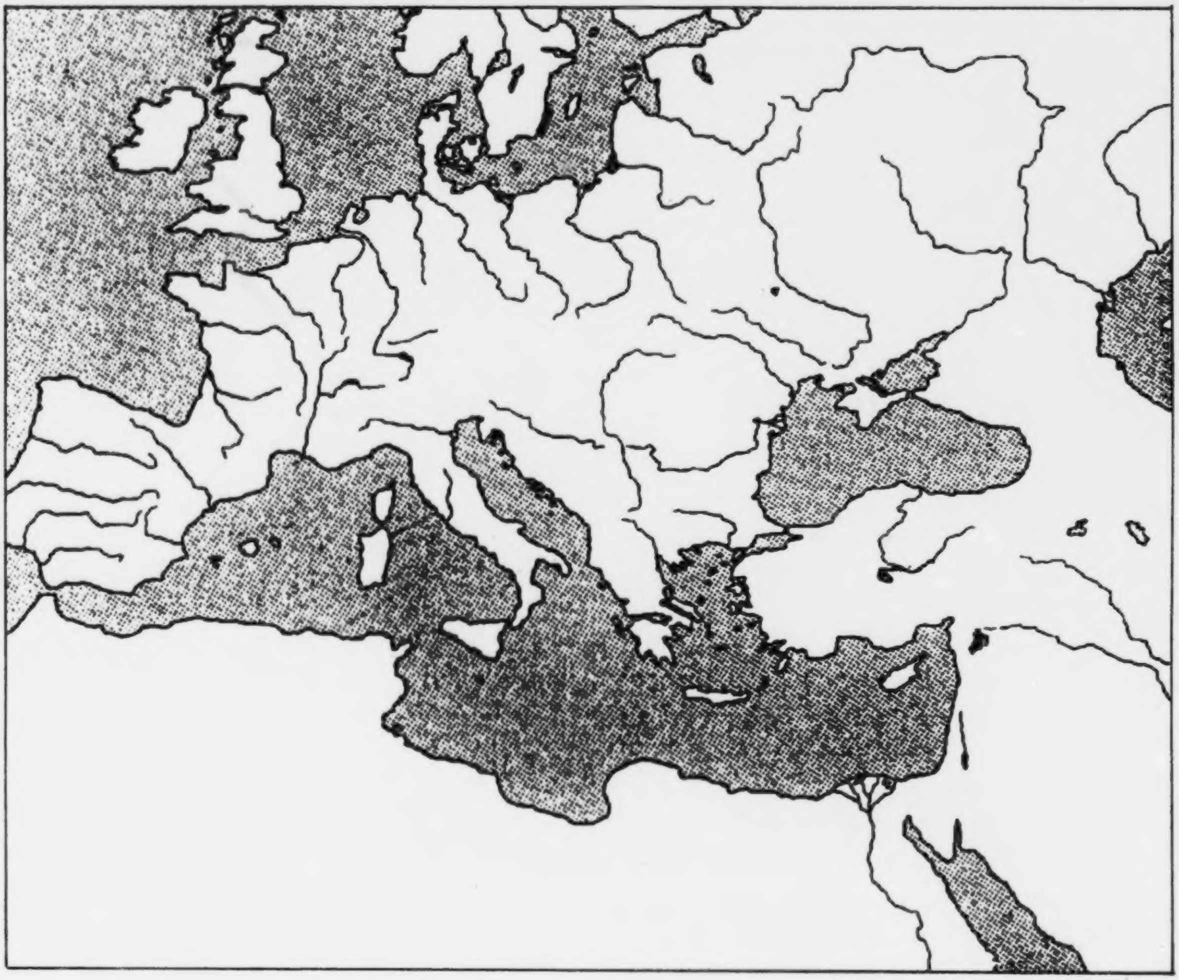
Place each of the following on the map in **small letters**.

Knossos
Mycenae
Troy
Miletus
Naxos
Rhodes
Ionia
Athens
Piraeus
Mount Olympus
Samos
Lesbos
Delos
Sparta
Corinth
Delphi
Thebes
Marathon
Tiryns
Pylos

Name ______________________________

Class ______________________________

THE ANCIENT GREEK WORLD



STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT A

LITERATURE AND HISTORY (ALL DATES B.C.)
MINOAN-MYCENAEAN GREECE

Date	Greece	Crete	Near East
2000	First Greek speakers enter Greece	"Palace Period" begins (until ca. 1300)	First composition of **Gilgamesh** epic?
1900			
1800			First composition of **Enuma Elish?**
1700		Destruction of palaces at Knossos & Phaistos (later rebuilt)	
1600	Shaft graves at Myceane	Linear A in use (non-Greek)	
1500		Eruption of Thera	Rise of Hittite Empire
		Catastrophic destruction of Cretan palaces (ca. 1450)	
		Greeks in Knossos, Linear B in use. (Greek)	
	Tholos Tombs		
1400	Palaces at Mycenae, Tiryns, Pylos; Linear B	Destruction of last palace at Knossos (ca. 1375)	
1300			
1200	Destruction of Troy VIIA		
			Overthrow of Hittite Empire
	Traditional Date of Troy's fall: 1184 (Eratosthenes)		

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT A

"GEOMETRIC" (OR "DARK AGE") GREECE

Date	History	Literature	Archaeology (vase painting styles)
1100	(1104) Traditional date of Dorian invasion of Peloponnesus		Protogeometric (1100-950)
1000	(1044) Traditional date of migration to Ionia (Asia Minor)		
900		Golden age of oral epic poetry	
800			
	(776) First "historical" Olympic Games		Geometric (950-700)
		(ca. 750) Introduction of Greek alphabet	

EVALUATING EVIDENCE: THE DECLINE OF MINOAN CIVILIZATION

A. Objectives

1. To explore the causes of the decline of the Minoan civilization.
2. To familiarize students with Minoan and Mycenaean systems of writing and to show the connection between them.
3. To develop awareness of the implications of cultural diffusion.
4. To build upon the concept that history is change.
5. To promote the abilities of students to present logical deductions based upon evidence, thus utilizing the historical method.
6. To encourage critical thinking.
7. To emphasize the tentative nature of historical conclusions, particularly as they apply to the ancient period.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Have a student read aloud the introduction and the statement of the problem at the beginning of **WORKSHEET II**, *Evaluating Evidence*. Then, as each set of evidentiary statements is read, students must brainstorm answers to the questions that accompany each. Each successive body of evidence will serve to eliminate some inferences and hypotheses. At the end of the exercise, most students will reach the same conclusions that the archaeologists did. However, there are several

possible solutions to the problem and no one answer is certain.

2. Two statements should be made before the actual process of analysis begins.

a. "Do not read ahead."

b. "There are no right or wrong answers. As long as your ideas are logical, they may be as valid as anyone else's."

c. After the activity the teacher should distribute the **BACKGROUND MATERIALS** for this lesson, "The End of Minoan Civilization." Students will then compare their conclusions with those of the archaeologists.

C. Motivation

This lesson is introduced with the simple statment, "Today we're going to play detective." This is followed by another sentence or two to explain the nature of the exercise and the problem to be solved. (For students of this grade level, 9th or 10th, this is sufficient to hook them!)

D. Related Questions

1. Why would the Mycenaeans have used Minoan writing given that their spoken language was different from that of the Minoans?
2. For what purposes might the Mycenaeans have taken Linear B back home with them when they left Crete?

EVALUATING EVIDENCE

Our knowledge of early cultures is based to a great extent on those artifacts that have endured over long periods of time. Through examination of artifacts and their locations we can make many inferences.

To **infer** is to reason from the known to the unknown and to draw conclusions from evidence. An inference is less certain than a fact and may never be verified. The reason for using both terms, fact and inference, is to distinguish givens, (e.g. "A bone was found,") from meanings that can be drawn from fact, (e.g. "There are so many bones here, people had lots to eat.")

Most of our information about the Minoan and Mycenaean cultures is based on the archaeological finds of Schliemann, Evans, and others. Through the process of inference, what deductions can you make about the evidence that follows?

THE PROBLEM WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO SOLVE IS: WHAT CAUSED THE WIDESPREAD DESTRUCTIONS IN CRETE AROUND 1450 B.C. THAT LED TO THE END OF MINOAN CIVILIZATION?

Evidence: Around 1450 B.C. a major catastrophe occurred that affected the entire island of Crete. Fires caused widespread destruction, in some places massive stone walls were toppled, and buildings collapsed.

Question: What possible events might have triggered destruction of this kind?

Evidence: The Aegean region is an area of great earthquake activity. Around 1700 B.C. a massive earthquake seems to have leveled many buildings on Crete. The buildings were subsequently rebuilt in the same style. After the destructions of 1450 most structures seem not to have been rebuilt.

Question: Could the catastrophe of 1450 have resulted from another earthquake?

Evidence: Earthquake activity also occurred prior to the eruption of a volcano on an island named Thera, north of Crete. Archaeologists are not certain of the date of the eruption, but it destroyed the civilization on the island of Thera, covering the cities in thick layers of ash. The culture of Thera at the time of the eruption was closely related to that of the Minoans just prior to 1450 B.C. Layers of volcanic ash have been found in a number of places on Crete.

Question: Could the eruption of Thera have been responsible for the destructions in 1450 B.C.?

Evidence: Prior to 1450 B.C. the script known as Linear A was in use apparently throughout Crete. Starting around 1450 B.C. a new script came into use. This was Linear B. It was deciphered by a young architect named Michael Ventris. He concluded that over half the symbols used in Linear A are also used to write Linear B, and that Linear B is a written form of the Greek language.

Question: Why did the written script change?

Evidence: The palace at Knossos was rebuilt after 1450 B.C., and almost all Linear B tablets on Crete come from there. The tablets mention many cities throughout Crete.

Question: Why are few Linear B texts found at any sites except Knossos?

Evidence: Prior to 1450 B.C. there is little evidence for an interest in warfare on the part of the Minoans: their cities were not fortified, and their artwork tended to feature scenes of nature, religion, and life. Some of the Linear B tablets found at Knossos contain inventory lists of a variety of weapon, spears, swords, chariots, etc. Burials of warriors are also found after 1450 B.C.

Question: What might account for this change?

Evidence: Knossos was destroyed again around 1380 B.C. Historians are unsure what may have caused this new disaster. Some believe it may have resulted from rebellions by local people, others think an earthquake or an invasion may have been to blame. After 1380 B.C. Linear B texts are found in several sites on the Greek mainland, where the script continued to be used until 1200 B.C.

Question: Putting all this evidence together, can you reconstruct the course of events that brought an end to Minoan civilization?

THE END OF MINOAN CIVILIZATION

By Amanda H. Podany

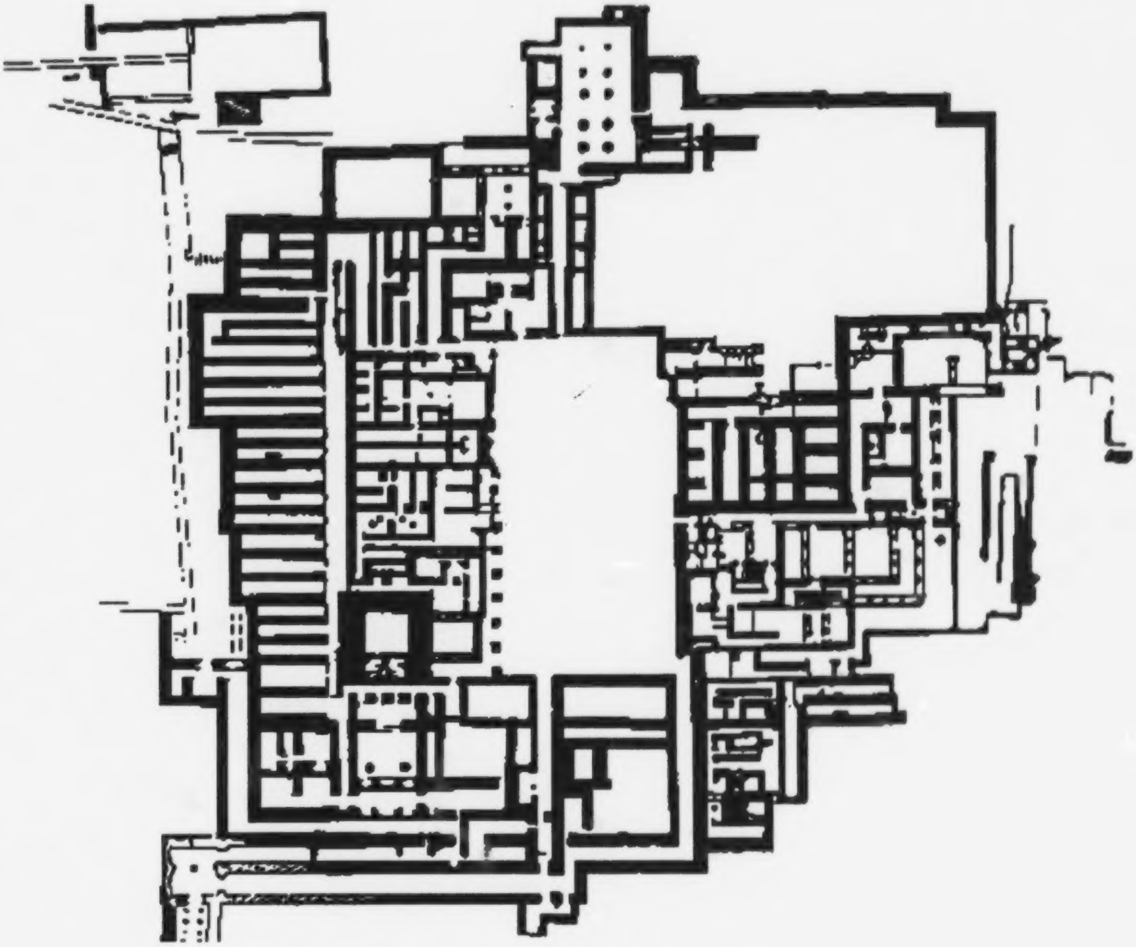
As you may have concluded from the evidence given in the last section, there is no easy answer to the question "What caused the widespread destructions on Crete around 1450 B.C.?" Fires can be caused both by natural disasters and by invaders. Today earthquakes can cause fires when gas lines break or when electrical lines fall, but in ancient times there was no piped gas or electricity. People used oil lamps to light their homes. These could have caused fires if they tipped over during the earthquake. One reason that many historians think a natural disaster was the likely cause of much of the destruction on Crete is that the damage was so widespread. It seems unlikely that invaders would have reached all parts of the island in the course of their conquest. Also, why would they choose to destroy all the valuable property that they would later rule? A final clue is seen in the massive stone walls which fell: it is much harder for men than for an earthquake to topple walls.

If a natural disaster therefore seems to be implicated, why did the Minoans not rebuild as they had before in 1700 B.C.? Here the controversial evidence of the eruption of Thera is brought into play by some historians and archaeologists. Perhaps, if the eruption took place at around 1450 B.C., the Minoans were faced with a double disaster: not only were their buildings destroyed, but their fields and towns were covered with a layer of ash which made farming impossible for a while. Some historians have even proposed that the eruption may have caused a disruption of the patterns of the weather, which also caused problems for farmers. The date of the eruption is still uncertain, so we cannot be sure whether the volcano played a significant role in weakening Minoan civilization.

The evidence of the Linear B documents shows that Greek speaking peoples moved to Crete at about the same time as the catastrophe that overwhelmed the Minoans. They must have been Mycenaeans from the mainland, whose power had been growing for the past century. The Mycenaeans had no writing system of their own, but they adapted Linear A to represent the sounds of their own language, creating Linear B. Not only did the Mycenaeans arrive, but the fact that Linear A went out of use at Knossos shows that, at least in the center of the island, the Mycenaeans took power. Some of their texts and burials show a greater interest in military matters than was characteristic of the Minoans.

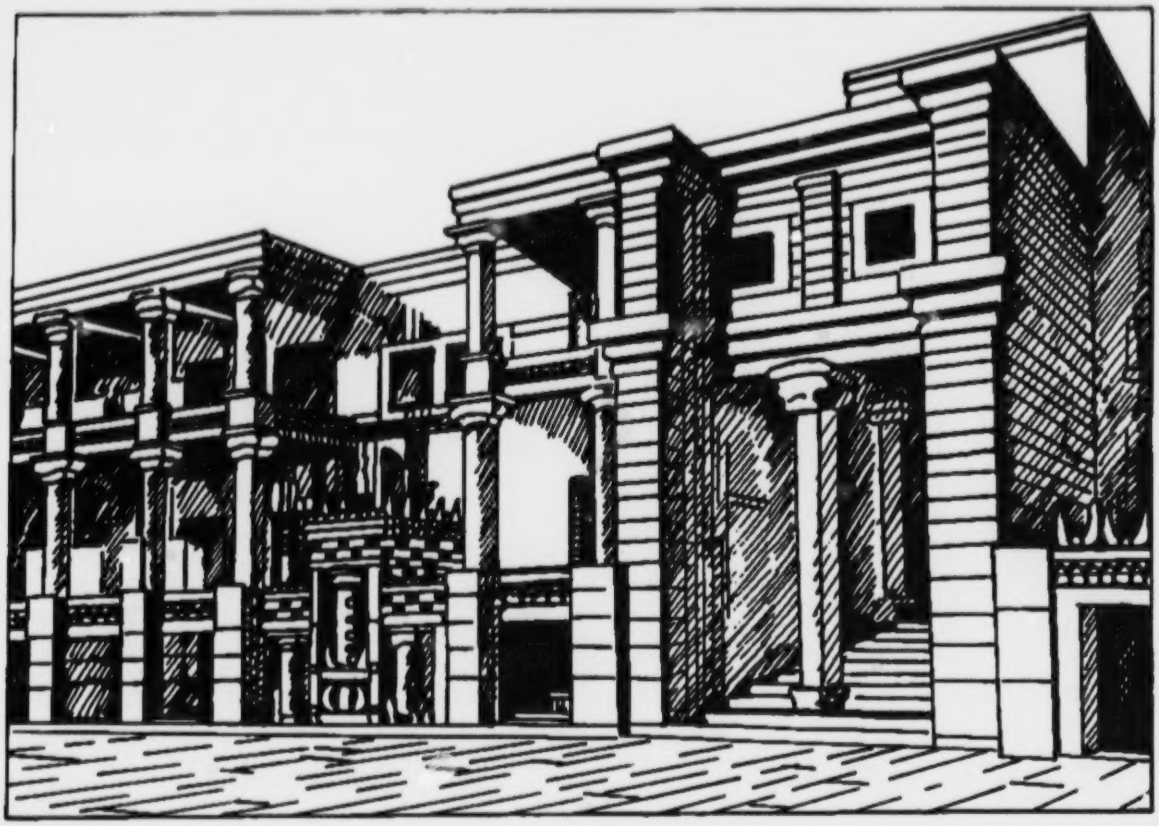
Some scholars have suggested that the Mycenaeans were solely responsible for all the devastation throughout Crete in 1450 B.C. This may have been your conclusion in evaluating the evidence, and it may still prove to be the right one. Most historians, however, conclude that a combination of natural forces (earthquakes, the eruption of Thera, or both) weakened Minoan civilization and made possible an invasion by Greek-speaking Mycenaeans who took over control of much of the island from their base at Knossos. Having invented a script to assist them in the administration of their new lands, the Mycenaeans on Crete later taught the script to clerks in Mycenaean cities in Greece.

PLAN OF THE PALACE OF MINOS AT KNOSSOS



Illustrated by Carole Collier Frick

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE STATE APARTMENTS AT KNOSSOS



Illustrated by Carole Collier Frick

MYCENAE

A. Objectives

1. To locate the main Mycenaean sites.
2. To place the Mycenaeans in their chronological context.
3. To recognize the important Mycenaean archaeological finds.
4. To identify the salient features of Mycenaean culture.
5. To hypothesize about the causes for the destruction of the Mycenaean civilization.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Map location of important Mycenaean sites, (e.g. Mycenae, Tiryns, Pylos, Athens, Thebes, Gla, etc.)
2. Have students read the **DRAMATIC MOMENT.**
3. Pass out the **BACKGROUND MATERIALS** for this lesson.
4. Discussion of the causes for the decline of the Bronze Age Greek,(i.e., Mycenaen) culture.

C. Sample Questions for Discussion of Background Materials

1. There have been no gold mines found in the Peloponnesus. How do you think the Mycenaeans obtained the gold used in the objects that were uncovered?

2. What conclusion can you draw from the weapons and armor found at these sites?

3. What other evidence supports these conclusions?

4. Why do you think the Mycenaean royalty buried their dead in beehive (tholos) tombs?

5. What evidence is presented for the decline of the Mycenaean civilization?

D. Evaluating the Lesson

1. Testing for this topic may include objective questions based upon the information presented.

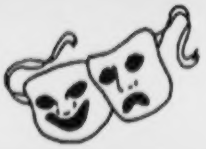
2. This topic lends itself well to essay questions relating to the nature of the Mycenaean culture and its decline.

E. Resources

1. Commercial slides are available for purchase for this lesson. (A less expensive technique is to make slides from photographs.)

2. Books such as Michael Wood's *In Search of the Trojan War*, N.Y., Facts on File Publications, 1985 have many illustrations which will help students.

A DRAMATIC MOMENT



"THE GREEK STONES SPEAK"

Homer tells us that Troy fell before Agamemnon, King of "Mycenae, rich in gold." The citadel of Mycenae under the shadow of crystalline mountains, overlooking the rich Argive plain, had early attracted Heinrich Schliemann and in the autumn of 1876, after his monumental discoveries at Troy, he went there to dig. With his usual good luck he hit, within the walls, in less than seven weeks of digging, upon a grave circle. It was crammed with gold diadems, cups, and masks. It contained also the pathetic bones of royal children, their hands and feet wrapped in gold leaf. There were inlaid bronze daggers, portraying lion hunts not native to the Peloponnesus; and bones which Schliemann's imagination enlarged to giant size. On November 28, 1876 he sent his famous telegram to King George of Greece (a Dane), congratulating him on the discovery of the graves of his ancestors!!

This passage was adapted from The Greek Stones Speak, by Paul MacKendrick, copyright 1981, and is reprinted with the kind permission of the copyright owner, W. W. Norton.

MYCENAEAN CIVILIZATION

By Amanda H. Podany

When Minoan civilization came to an end, the Mycenaean Greeks of the mainland were able to dominate the Aegean as the Minoans had done before them. Like the Minoans, they were active in overseas trade, especially in obtaining metals, such as copper and tin for bronze. The distinctive pottery of the Mycenaeans has been found throughout the eastern Mediterranean region, and to the west of Greece as well. Their artistic style incorporated many Minoan elements, and Linear B continued in use for administrative purposes. Unfortunately we have no evidence of Linear B being used to write literary or historical texts, so, for example, we know none of the names of Mycenaean kings and nothing of their achievements.

Like their Minoan equivalents, each major Mycenaean city was dominated by a palace. However, the palaces were not on the same plan as the Minoan ones, and by 1200 B.C. the citadels were usually fortified. Each palace may have housed a different king; it is unlikely that a single king had control of all of Greece. The Linear B documents show that society was stratified into classes, including officials, commoners, and slaves. The religion of the Mycenaeans is poorly represented archaeologically: few shrines have been found. Nonetheless, the names of the gods given in Linear B tablets show that most of the gods worshipped by the later Greeks of Classical times were already venerated hundreds of years before by their ancestors, the Mycenaeans.

Mycenaean civilization had come to an end by 1100 B.C.; the skills of writing were lost (writing had to be rediscovered by the Greeks some time later), foreign trade collapsed, and people moved from the cities back to small farming villages. However, this was not the result of a sudden catastrophe but a gradual process that began with the destruction of a few cities around 1250 B.C. There is no clear cause behind this process. Some historians have proposed that a climatic change took place, making the land less fertile and causing people to migrate to other lands in search of food. Certainly some Mycenaeans did move, for example to the island of Cyprus, at this time. There is no clear evidence for a climatic change, however, as the cause. Later Greeks remembered this period as the time of the invasion of a people they called the Dorians, who spoke a dialect of Greek distinct from that of the Mycenaeans. But archaeologists searching for evidence of an invasion have had little luck. A third alternative is that internal wars between the Greeks themselves may have weakened the states and undermined the culture.

Although most of the achievements of the Mycenaeans were lost and forgotten during the centuries that separated them from the civilization of the later Greeks, their language and religion lived on. Also, stories of great heroes of the Mycenaean age continued to be told, generation after generation. These stories formed the basis for many of the myths and legends of the Greeks of Classical times. One such legend told of a great war against a city named Troy. The Trojan War is the subject of the next two lessons.

THE TROJAN WAR: CAUSES

A. Objectives

1. To acquaint students with the legendary background of the Trojan War.

2. To establish a geographic focus for the Trojan War.

3. To encourage students to think critically about the evidence given in Homer.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Read aloud the legend of the Trojan War as told by Homer in the *Iliad*.

2. Pass out **BACKGROUND MATERIALS** for this lesson.

3. Review the location of the Trojan and Mycenaean areas on a map.

4. Have students discuss, based on the geographic location of Mycenae and Troy and on additional information presented in class, what may have been the factual basis for the Trojan War.

Interesting Sidelights

- In Greek legend the time frame used to denote a long period of time was always ten years (e.g. the Trojan War, Odysseus' journey after the war, etc.)

- Priam of Troy had 50 sons, none of whom survived the war.
- According to Homer, Achilles sat out most of the war in his tent in a pout because Agamemnon, the leader of the Greek expedition to Troy, had taken a slave girl from him.

C. Evaluating the Lesson

The information presented in this classroom session may be included as part of a general unit test administered when the entire unit is concluded.

D. Resources

1. A copy of Homer's *Iliad* from which several passages may be directly quoted so that students may receive the flavor of the writing.
2. Art slides or photographs depicting the Trojan War in art.

THE WRATH OF ACHILLES

By Rhoda Himmel

The Trojan War broke out when the handsome Paris, son of King Priam of Troy, persuaded the beautiful Helen, wife of King Menelaus of Sparta, to leave her home and go with him to Troy. The action of Paris was particularly shocking to the Greeks because he had been a guest in the home of Menelaus and had therefore broken the sacred bond between guest and host which bound them to help, not harm, each other. When Menelaus found Helen gone, he appealed to the other Greek rulers to help him get her back and to punish Paris and the Trojans. The Mycenaean rulers responded eagerly, for many of them had wooed Helen before she married Menelaus and they had promised to help him if anyone ever tried to take her away.

Within a short time a thousand-ship armada carried a great army to the Trojan shores. Although the Greek ranks included such famous heroes as Achilles, Ajax, and the wily Odysseus, their task was not to be an easy one, for the Trojans had great warriors of their own and Troy was strongly fortified.

For ten long years the Greeks lay siege to Troy. Although the plains outside the city rang with the clang of armour and the dying cries of many a brave warrior on his way to Hades, neither side could win a decisive victory. The Greeks could not break through the walls of Troy; nor could the Trojans drive the Greeks away. Throughout the war the gods also took part, now giving the advantage to one side, now to the other. Zeus, Apollo, and Aphrodite supported the Trojans while Hera, Poseidon and Athena fought for the Greeks.

One of the most dramatic events of the war was the duel between Paris' brother Hector, son of Priam and noblest of the Trojan warriors, and the mighty Greek hero, Achilles, who could only be killed by a wound in the heel. Achilles refused to fight throughout most of the war, but finally agreed to attack after his closest friend, Patroclus, was killed by Hector.

"When Hector first saw the dreadful Achilles running towards him over the plain, he lost heart and took to his heels. Three times Achilles chased Hector around the walls of the city before the Trojan determined to face his enemy and let the gods decide the outcome. Although Hector fought bravely, he could not withstand the furious strength of Achilles who, helped by the gods, at length drove his spear through the Trojan's neck. Achilles then removed his armor and said to the Greeks, 'But, come, sons of the Greeks, let us go back to the ships singing our song of glory and taking this man with us. For we have won great glory. We have killed highborn Hector to whom the Trojans throughout their city prayed as to a god.' And he cut the backs of Hector's heels and put cords of leather through and tied them to his chariot. He lifted in the armor and got in and touched the horses with his whip. Swiftly they started forward. The dust went up round Hector's dark hair outstretched and his head that was so beautiful before; for now Zeus had given him over to be shamefully handled in his own land where he was born." *

Eventually Achilles, moved to pity by the pleas of the old King Priam, surrendered Hector's body to his father, but with the death of their hero, Hector, and with the later death of Paris, who himself had slain Achilles, the Trojans had lost much of their zest for battle. No longer did they come out and fight the Greeks upon the plains but remained like prisoners behind their city *walls . It seemed that the war would last forever, for the Greeks could not break their way through.*

At last, with the help of the goddess Athena, the crafty Odysseus devised a plan. The Greeks built a huge wooden horse which they left on the beach, thus leading the Trojans to think it was either an offering to the gods to ensure their safe return to Greece or a token of peace left for them. Then, after secretly hiding the best of their warriors in the belly of the horse, they pretended to sail for their homeland. Despite warnings that the horse was some kind of Greek trick, the Trojans dragged it into the city. That night the war-weary Trojans feasted and celebrated, never dreaming that the destruction of their city was close at hand. When finally the city lay in exhausted sleep, the Greeks stealthily crept from their pine horse and opened the gates of Troy to their comrades, who had returned to the beaches under cover of night. Within a short time the famous ancient city lay in flaming ruins, with many of her citizens the victims of Greek swords.

So ended the most famous war in all Western history, made unforgettable through the lines of Homer's Iliad.

---

* From *The Iliad of Homer, the Wrath of Achilles,* I.A. Richards, New York, W.W. Norton, 1955.

THE TROJAN WAR

By Amanda H. Podany

Troy was the setting of a great legendary war of the Greeks against the Trojans that the Greeks recalled centuries after it was believed to have taken place. The story of part of the Trojan War was told by a Greek poet named Homer in his epic work the *Iliad*. People reading the epic have wondered, almost ever since it was written, if there was any historical truth to the tale. One way to find out was to excavate the site of Hisarlik, which is believed to be the location of ancient Troy, and to search for clues that would confirm Homer' s description of it. Archaeologists also looked for evidence of an invasion that might represent the Greeks conquest of the city. Unfortunately, the Trojans never developed or adopted a system of writing, so we have no "history" of theirs at all. We have to depend on archaeological material from the excavation of the city in order to reconstruct events.

Troy is located on the north-west coast of Anatolia (modern Turkey), and archaeologists have shown that it flourished both before and during the time of the Mycenaean cities of Greece. It was one of the major cities of the region throughout the late third millennium B.C. (even before the Minoan palaces were built on Crete), as is seen in the buildings and artifacts from level II at the site, which flourished at this time.

Around 2000 B.C. newcomers seem to have arrived in Troy; they made the city grander still. This is the period of level VI in the excavations, which lasted until around 1300 B.C. The new settlers brought with them the domesticated horse and new styles of pottery. In 1300 B.C. the city was destroyed, but there are no signs of burning or looting, and the city was rebuilt obviously by the same people who had lived there before. The rebuilt city is known to archaeologists as level VIIA. The Trojans were not themselves Mycenaeans, but they traded regularly with the Mycenaeans, especially during the early fourteenth century B.C. This is seen in the large number of pieces of Mycenaean pottery that are found towards the end of the level VI period of occupation at Troy. On the other hand, no recognizably Trojan objects have been found in Greece. Perhaps the Greeks were obtaining textiles, horses, or even food from the Trojans.

By the time of level VIIA at Troy, trade with the Mycenaean Greeks had decreased considerably. Was this because the Mycenaeans, the Trojans, or both, had economic problems at the time, or was it because they had become enemies?

Historians are faced with a number of questions regarding the Trojan War. First, they wonder if it happened at all. Legend cannot be regarded as reliable history, and Homer did not write his account until the Trojan War had become legendary, several centuries after it was supposed to have happened. In this lesson you will read a synopsis of story of the Trojan War: to what extent can it be trusted as history? What elements could be tested for historical accuracy by archaeologists or historians?

If we conclude that there was in fact a war between the Trojans and Mycenaeans (which some historians do), what caused it? Tradition says that the war was fought over a woman named Helen, but historians today look for a more practical reason. Troy is located at a strategic crossroads of two trade routes: the route by sea from the Black Sea to the Aegean, and the land route from Europe to Asia, crossing only a short stretch of water just north of Troy. Why might this have made it a target of Mycenaean attack? Also, the war was believed by later Greeks to have taken place around 1200 B.C., in what we know as the closing years of the Mycenaean period. Why might the Mycenaeans have been fighting overseas at that time?

In searching for evidence for the Trojan War, we may also wonder which of the excavated levels at the site of Troy represents the time of the war, and whether any of them fits Homer's description well enough to lend support to the idea that the war actually took place. In Lesson Five you will look at some of the evidence available to archaeologists on this question.

LESSON FIVE

THE TROJAN WAR: ARCHAEOLOGY

A. Objectives

1. To reinforce the significance of archaeological interpretation.

2. To give students practice in the skills of archaeological interpretation.

3. To reinforce the concept that archaeological interpretation may be tentative.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Read aloud the **DRAMATIC MOMENT,** Schliemann's account of his interest in the Trojan site as contained in the introduction to his ***Troy and Its Remains.***

2. Present **DOCUMENT C**, the evidence found by Schliemann at Troy II , by Dorpfeld at Troy VI, and by Blegen at Troy VIIA, and have students attempt to determine which level might have been the Troy of the Trojan War. Divide the class into small groups for this activity. Each group must justify its conclusion.

3. Read **DOCUMENT D**, "Archaeological Evidence From Troy."

C. Alternative Activities

1. Students can prepare a newspaper of the Trojan War. The topics included may be the mythological bases of the war and also the archaeological finds associated with Troy and Mycenae.

2. Show slides of the excavation of Troy and the various

artifacts found there. Have students draw conclusions about the culture of the Trojans based upon these finds.

D. Evaluating the Lesson

The unit test for the Mycenaean and Minoan civilization might include essay questions such as:

1. Describe the various sources of information that have provided us with knowledge about the ancient Minoans and Greeks.

2. What evidence has shown that the Minoan, Mycenaean, and Trojan cultures had contacts with one another?

3. Compare and contrast the causes for the decline of the Trojan, Mycenaean, and Minoan civilizations.

4. Students may be tested in traditional ways or the preparation of a project such as a newspaper or archaeological summary may be utilized for evaluation.

E. Resources

1. Show slides and/or photographs of the Trojan site and artifacts. The sources that contain particularly useful photographs are contained in the bibliography of this packet.

2. "The Search for the Trojan War," Part 2, by Michael Grant, a segment of the BBC six-part series about Troy is especially relevant for this unit in that it brings together the mythology and archaeology of Troy, Mycenae, and Crete, and includes interesting biographical information about the major archaeologists involved. (About 1 hour.)

A DRAMATIC MOMENT

"TROY AND ITS REMAINS"

[To be read aloud by/to students]

"As soon as I had learnt to speak, my father related to me the great deeds of the Homeric heroes. I loved these stories; they enchanted me and transported me with the highest enthusiasm. The first impressions which a child receives abide with him during his whole life; and, though it was my lot, at the age of fourteen, to be apprenticed in the warehouse of E. Ludwig Holtz in the small town of Furstenberg, in Mecklenburg, instead of following the scientific career for which I felt an extraordinary predisposition, I always retained the same love for the famous men of antiquity which I had conceived for them in my first childhood......

[The teacher may supply here some salient details of Schliemann's life, including his study of ancient Greek and his marriage to Sophie.]

At last I was able to realize the dream of my whole life, and to visit at my leisure the scene of those events which had such an intense interest for me, and the country of the heroes whose adventures had delighted and comforted my childhood."

From Heinrich Schliemann, Troy and Its Remains, edited by Philip Smith, New York, Arno Press, 1875.

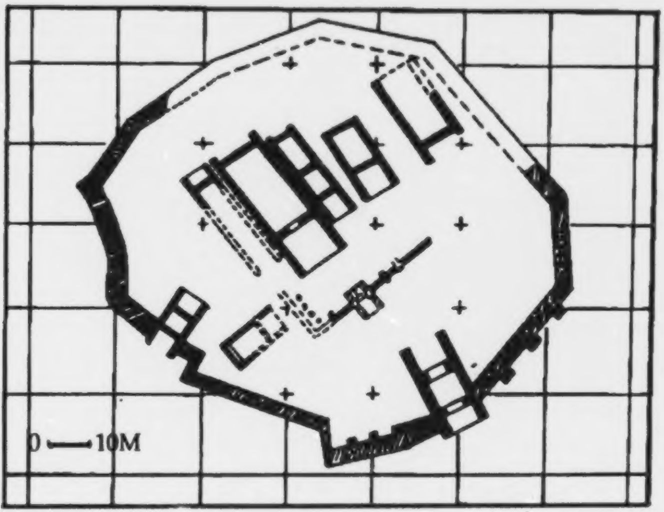
ACTIVITY SHEETS: ARCHAEOLOGICAL COMPARISON OF FINDS AT SIGNIFICANT LEVELS AT TROY

Clues From the Iliad

- "Well-built city with wide streets, beautiful walls and great gates."
- "Strong towers"
- "Steep"
- "One section of wall weaker than the rest where the city is easiest to attack."
- "Batter or angle of walls when Patroclus tried to scale the face of the wall."
- "Beautiful decorations on the castle walls."
- "Settlement extended on to a plateau."

Schliemann - Troy Level II

- Wall of finely worked limestone blocks (later judged to be part of Troy VI).
- Size of settlement 100 yards across.
- Copper salvers, and cauldrons . Gold, silver and bronze cups.
- Copper lanceheads.
- Gold rings, earrings, bracelets.
- Two gold diadems, called by Schliemann the "Jewels of Helen."
- Pottery of a primitive design (pre-Mycenaean).



Schliemann's Troy Level II
Illustrated by Carole Collier Frick

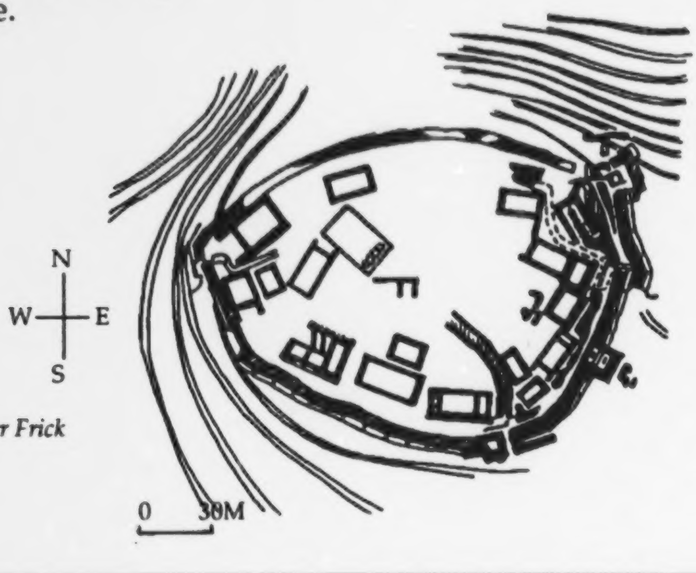
STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT C

Dorpfeld's Troy, Level VI

Wilhelm Dorpfeld was an architect who helped Schliemann excavate the Trojan site. In the spring of 1893, two years after Schliemann's death, Dorpfeld, financially aided by Sophie Schliemann and Kaiser Wilhelm III of Germany, returned to Troy to continue the excavation. Dorpfeld opened up the southern slope of Hisarlik in a great curve around the hill and concluded that the Troy of the great war was Troy VI, a level that represented a time period some 1000 years later than Schliemann's Troy II.

Evidence:

- Huge walls.
- Settlement 250 yards across.
- Immense watchtower at northeast corner.
- Walls made in sections with pronounced batter (slope).
- Gate on east protected by a long overlapping wall.
- Base of a large square tower built with beautifully fitted limestone blocks.
- Important gate on the southern side with another massive tower fronted by stone bases.
- One area of wall inferior.
- Mycenaean pottery found throughout the city.
- Debris piled up in many places.
- Broken walls, large houses ruined.
- Fortification walls dislodged.
- No signs of fire.



Dorpeld's Troy Level VI
Illustrated by Carole Collier Frick

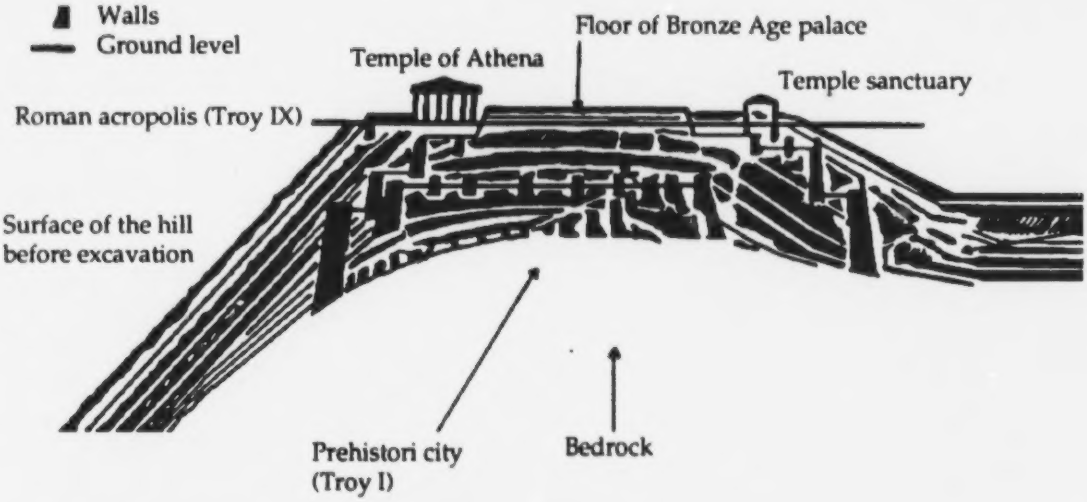
STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT D

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE FROM TROY

By Amanda H. Podany

Heinrich Schliemann's conclusion was that level II represented the Troy of the *Iliad*. He believed that the richness of the objects found in connection with level II represented a city as wealthy as that described by Homer. At the time of his excavation Mycenaean sites had not yet been explored, so Schliemann did not recognize that the pottery found in association with level II was earlier than that of the Mycenaeans. Since it was Mycenaean Greeks who fought the Trojans we now believe that the occupation of level I was too early to represent the time of the Trojan War.

Archaeologists and historians are divided as to whether level VI or level VIIA is more likely to be the Troy of the Trojan War. Level VI includes grand buildings and Mycenaean pottery, but it was destroyed without fire and was not looted, which suggests that the city suffered from a natural disaster rather than an invasion. Level VIIA, on the other hand, was burned and showed signs of people living under siege, as they would during a war. But the small houses and poor construction techniques of level VIIA show us that the city would not have looked like the splendid place described by Homer. The city attacked by the Mycenaeans may have been either that of level VI or level VIIA.


▌ Walls
— Ground level
Floor of Bronze Age palace
Temple of Athena
Temple sanctuary
Roman acropolis (Troy IX)
Surface of the hill before excavation
Prehistori city (Troy I)
Bedrock

Cross section of the hill of Hisarlik, Illustrated by Carole Collier Frick.

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT D

You can see that archaeology is of utmost importance to the study of ancient history. Archaeologists have discovered many of the primary source documents we use to reconstruct history. In the absence of written documents, as at Neolithic sites or at Troy, we depend on the evidence of objects and structures found by archaeologists for our understanding of history, although these are more difficult to interpret than are texts. The evidence of myth and legend can also help us reconstruct the events of the past but, as you have seen in this unit, myths require a great deal more scrutiny and testing than do other kinds of primary sources.

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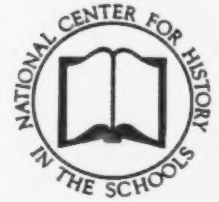
NATIONAL CENTER FOR HISTORY IN THE SCHOOLS

HOMER'S ODYSSEY: AN ELEMENTARY PASSION

A Unit Of Study For Grades 1 - 6

David Millstone
Advisory Panel, NCHS

Shipwreck of Odysseus from a geometric vase 8th Century B.C.
Illustrated by Carole Collier Frick

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HOMER'S ODYSSEY: AN ELEMENTARY PASSION

David H. Millstone
Marion W. Cross School
Norwich, Vermont

A dark classroom, shades drawn and lights out, illuminated only by the flickering glow of three candles.

Forty children, fifth graders, sitting and leaning and sprawling on a small rug in the meeting area of the Social Studies room, with another half-dozen teachers and parents dimly visible in the half-light.

A bearded young man with keen eyes, a guitar placed over one knee, his flickering shadow looming behind him on the wall, his gaze resting on the audience.

The storyteller waits, then takes a breath. He is about to start, and a hush falls, with all eyes intent on his. A stroke of chords, a muted arpeggio, the cry of a gull. He speaks:

"This is the tale of Odysseus... master of land ways, master of sea ways." A long pause.

"Darkness..." We are in the belly of the Trojan Horse with Odysseus and his companions. "And silence...and the breathing of men closely held, so that it is not loud." A cough. "Silence! Choke on your cough if you need to, but make no sound!"

This is my students' introduction to Homer's *Odyssey,* an epic story told by an ancient bard and newly brought to life in our fifth grade classroom by Odds Bodkin, talesman. Last week, children were reviewing states and capitals of the United States; for the next five months, they will be immersed in Bronze Age Greece and the wonders of ancient civilizations.

We begin, though, with the story. Today it's the Trojan War and the first adventures of Odysseus on his return voyage—his battle with Ciconians, and the adventures with the Lotus Eaters. Before we finish, we meet the Cyclops and Circe and Calypso, pass with Odysseus through the Scylla and Charybdis and survive the the Sirens, slaughter the cattle of Helios and witness the grim aftermath and finally arrive safely at home, the suitors slain and Odysseus reunited with his faithful wife, Penelope.

I want my fifth graders to come to the *Odyssey* as did the ancient Greeks, hearing the tale fresh from the lips of a stranger, a storyteller. For this reason, I provided beforehand no background information on ancient Greece, no review of Greek mythology, no videotapes searching for the

Trojan War. There is power in Homers tale, majestic strength that you feel when first you hear it. A teacher gifted in reading aloud might bring Homer's words alive through a good translation, but the book itself inevitably gets in the way. There is no real substitute for a storyteller's presence.

We found Odds Bodkin—yes, that's his name!—working within several hours' drive of our school, and hired him with funds provided initially by the local Friends of the Schools association. In subsequent years, money for his fee has come from the school's budget for visiting artists. It is money well spent, because that initial telling, nearly four hours of story spread over six sessions, provides an emotional charge that carries the children through the months to follow. If you cannot find a local storyteller interested in learning the *Odyssey* to tell, try to arrange for Odds to visit your school. If that does not work out, you could turn out the classroom lights and listen to tapes with your students (Bodkin, Bodman, Jabberwocky). Tapes are good, but a flesh-and-blood storyteller is much better.

The *Odyssey* unit itself lasts nearly three months, after which we move into a broader study of Greece and other civilizations. (Parents and children alike mention the long time spent as a strength of the unit.) The following list, in approximate chronological order, describes, in brief, selected activities in Social Studies and English classes.

Selected Activities

First Impressions

After each storytelling session, make lists at the chalkboard with words suggested by the children for each of four categories: people, places, things and ideas. The first three let you spell unusual and new words for them; you also have an opportunity to reinforce names that children did not catch in the story's telling. "You know, those people that Odysseus first fought after leaving Troy...." "You mean the Ciconians?" The ideas category (honor, bravery, revenge, cunning, love) stretches them, provides unexpected bonuses, and gives you quick proof that the children get more from the tale than memories of monsters.

Favorite Scenes

Give children frequent opportunity to draw scenes from the unfolding story. It's a way for them to recall images and to fix details on paper. It's also an easy way to make the point that different people hear the same story in different ways, a point you'll make later on when teaching storytelling techniques.

Watercolor by fifth grader Becca Fisher, to accompany her booklet for first and second graders, The Story of Polyphemus.

Dictation Service

Since Odds Bodkin begins his epic with the Trojan Horse and the Fall of Troy, the fifth graders hear from him only a short version of the Apple of Discord and the Judgement of Paris. A colleague teaching first grade reads those stories to her children, and each first grader then tells the episodes to a fifth-grade partner (D'Aulaire, Watson). The older children take dictation and write a legible printed copy. The next day, they hold editorial conferences with their young partners and revise the manuscripts as needed. Finally, the older children produce neat, final copies, which are usually typed on computer.

Cooperative Illustrations

In the first and fifth grade classrooms and the art room, we spread out different art materials: tempera paint, watercolors, magic markers, Cray-pas, materials for collage and several sizes of paper. Working with their dictation partners, children produce wonderful pictures to accompany the stories. When all have finished, we mount the illustrated tales in the front hall of the school—nearly 40 different versions of the same story.

Who Am I?

Tape the name of an *Odyssey* character onto the back of a student volunteer. Everyone else in the room knows who the student is; the volunteer's job is to learn his identity by asking questions. (You can allow only questions answerable by "yes" or "no," which makes the task more difficult.) This form of "20 Questions" in reverse is popular with children; name tags are even borrowed for use at recess.

Concentration

Using 3" x 5" index cards, prepare a set of 30 to 40 matching cards, such as "Zeus" on one and "Father of Athena" on another. Shuffle the cards, place them face down on a table or rug; children try to come up with matching pairs. For further challenge, make several different decks using more difficult clues.

Summarize the Story

Working as a class, children draw up an outline of the story as they remember it. The outline serves as a reference guide for the story telling activities to come.

Picture Sequence

Photocopy illustrations from different versions of the *Odyssey,* mount them on oaktag or poster board and laminate them for heavy use. The challenge? "Arrange these pictures in the order that they happened in the story." With 40 pictures spread out before them on the rug, small groups of children can easily spend 45 minutes sorting and discussing, trying to decide where is the right place on their pictorial timeline for this particular storm-battered ship.

Episode Experts

Each fifth grader chooses at least one episode with personal appeal. We use the class's story outline as a guide, trying to get all of the episodes covered by at least one individual. (Teachers can be experts, too!) The expert's job is to learn that part of the story thoroughly, and become prepared to tell it to others. Many of the next activities help make that eventual story-telling possible.

Active Listening

Play tapes over and over again; children will want to hear them. If you had a storyteller come to your room, make tapes during that telling and compare them to Odds Bodkin's version, or others such as the one produced by The minds Eye for National Public Radio (Jabberwocky). Give the children time to soak up images before asking them to write.

Read Good Translations

Everyday or two, read selected passages out loud. Find a translation you like—my favorite *Odyssey* is Robert Fitzgerald's—and don't worry about controlled vocabulary. Let the sound of well-written, rhythmic English flow from your tongue; children will be enriched for their exposure to new words. Some years, I also read aloud a retelling of the *Iliad*, which several children prefer to the *Odyssey* (Church).

Compare Different Versions

Stock your classroom with as many different versions of the Odyssey as you can find. Include simple retellings as well as complete translations (Church, Colum, Gates, Green, Hartzell, Lang, Richardson, Webb.) Invite children to bring their own copies from home; in our community we find many parents with a copy tucked away from a long-forgotten humanities course. Encourage children to read as many versions as they can, seeking details, phrases, ways of expressing shades of meaning. Out of this wide reading comes their own unique version of the story.

Greek Pottery

Our art teacher discusses traditional Greek pottery designs; she points out the proportions and balance of Greek pottery. After studying the vase paintings the fifth graders make up their own designs, creating scenes from the *Odyssey.* First drawings are made with black chalk on vase shaped pieces of orange construction paper. The teacher and another potter throw three dozen similar pots using one classic shape. Children then draw their designs on the pot with pencil, paint on a black underglaze, paint wax on the bottoms, and dip the entire vase in clear glaze. The final firing produces handsome black designs on rich terra cotta pottery. Consult your local potter for assistance.

Practice Storytelling

A prime objective of the *Odyssey* unit is developing children's oral language skills. Like writing, storytelling does not come easily for many of us; giving students time to practice their tales helps them along. As an exercise, storyteller Laura Simms suggests having children focus on one image from their story. At a signal from the teacher, they wander around the room and at another signal, they take as a partner the person closest to them. One child starts to describe the image, and part of the story; the teacher cuts off telling after a minute or two. The listener responds with positive comments and suggestions; the roles reverse. Then—and this part is strange and exciting—you continue your wanderings and do the same thing over again. That instant replay is a powerful experience; children usually discover that the image is now more fixed in their minds, that the description flows more easily. From here on, allow children lots of time to practice telling their tales to each other; after lots of practice, ask for volunteers to tell their stories to the class. Beginning storytellers need lots of support, so structure carefully any critique of the storyteller.

Tell the Stories to Wider Audiences

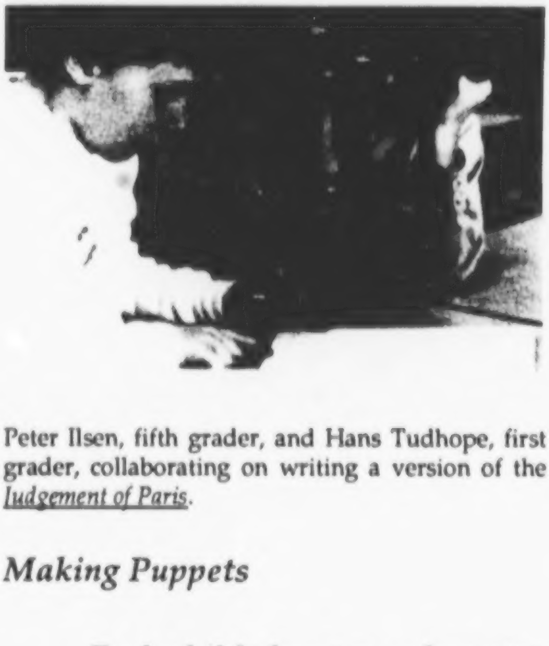
Our fifth graders take responsibility for teaching the *Odyssey* to the first graders by telling them episodes each day. This process stretches over a month. One day, a boy might tell the Trojan Horse to the entire first grade class; several days later, four children might tell their own versions of Polyphemus to small groups of first graders. We also schedule a Parents' Night for storytelling and puppet shows.

Who Am I? (Part II)

Here is another challenge for both older and younger children: "Try writing a riddle with seven clues, hardest first. By then end of the clues, everyone should figure out the answer." My favorite, submitted two years ago by a first grader started, "I am everywhere in the story." which left us all baffled. When the final clue was read—"I am wine dark"—the older children gave smiles of delight and eagerly raised their hands.

Writing Stories

After four to six weeks of storytelling and oral language, children start to write their own versions of *Odyssey* stories. Instead of worrying about what happens next, children concentrate on getting the right words to express their intention. Children at all levels of writing ability produce fine stories because they know what they want to say. Stories are typed on computer, printed neatly and published in a book, *Tales from Homer's Greece*.



Peter Ilsen, fifth grader, and Hans Tudhope, first grader, collaborating on writing a version of the Judgement of Paris.

Making Puppets

Each child chooses a character from Homer: mortals, gods, monsters are all acceptable. Puppet design follows, with front and side-view drawings. All puppets should be the same style; hand puppets are easiest, but an ambitious teacher might try marionettes. Build the head (we use about six layers of papier-mache over a balloon), and paint it and sew a costume. This process takes some ten hours, spread over three weeks.

Cyclops puppets, made by (left to right) Justin Lloyd, Seth Horan, Jon Finer, and Mark Turco, all fifth graders.

Puppet Play Production

Children work in groups of four to six; they start by choosing an episode that all enjoy. The playwriting process starts with small group storytelling (no puppets at this stage), as children talk their way through the episode. As they tell and re-tell their story, they begin to focus more on dialogue and stage directions and less on narration We use this project to stress writing dialogue, as well as to review proper computer use. (This is an excellent use of word-processing; as each child enters her lines, she moves aside for the next student. A simple command produces neatly typed scripts.) Once they've written a script, children need ample time to rehearse and revise their production before presenting it to classmates, younger children, and parents. Set aside at least 10 classroom hours from start to finish.

Odyssey Projects

See the list of project suggestions below; children frequently come up with their own ideas. They are required to complete two projects; I stress that doing one project well is better than many hastily. Some class time is available for research, but most work is at home. Children enjoy bringing in thei finished projects to share with others.

Odyssey Newspaper

Near the end of the unit, after the Parents' Night, I suggest that we collaborate on an *Odyssey* spoof, in the form of a newspaper: Children love the idea. One year's paper soon had headlines reading "Sirens Turn Heavy Metal," ads for Lotus Patch Kids, a Poly-Poly comic strip starring our favorite Cyclops, an advice column ("Ask Aphrodite"), and the Weekly Top 10 (with #1 song "Rock Me Polyphemus"). Children enjoy playing around with language, producing the newspaper, and making fun of the tale. It is a light-hearted way to end a serious unit of study.

Odyssey Projects

Writing An Epic: The *Odyssey* is an epic poem, a long set of verses on a heroic theme. Take part of the story and turn it into poetry. Your verses do not need to rhyme.

First Person Narratives: Write part of the story from a different point of view. Try telling the Cyclops story as if you were Polyphemus. How would a Lotus Eater describe the meeting with the Greeks? Imagine that you are Circe, faced with the sudden arrival of Odysseus and his men.

Cartoons: Draw a series of comics based on an episode in the *Odyssey* or the *Iliad*. This can be a series of short strips like the funny pages, or something longer like the Tintin books. Your completed cartoons should be with black ink so that they

A child's illustration of the Trojan Horse.

can be photocopied.

Mural: Working with a small group, design and draw a large mural showing scenes from the travels of Odysseus. You may use paints or colored chalks or Cray-Pas for this project. (If enough people are interested, we could make an enormous mural to cover the front hall of the school!)

Map Of Travels: Make a map showing Odysseus' wanderings, a source of debate for thousands of years. Two modern authors who have tried to recreate his journey are Ernle Bradford (see his book), *Ulysses Found*, and Tim Severin, writing in *National Geographic*. They don't agree on the route. Whose argument makes sense to you?

Radio Play: Take an episode and write a radio drama, designed with appropriate sound effects. With enough friends, record the play and we'll play it in class.

Dictionary: Make a dictionary of the many places and people, gods and mortals alike, mentioned in Homer's tales. This would be a reference book that others could use when they came upon a character and could not remember who that person was. The book would be useful for many parents, too.

Timeline: Write and draw an illustrated timeline, showing when things happened in the story. You could start with the Apple of Discord, work your way through the Trojan War, and then look at the wanderings of Odysseus for the next 10 years.

Ship Pictures: After completing the appropriate reading and research, make some pictures of Greek ships. Make your drawings as accurate as possible, so someone looking at them will have a good idea of what Odysseus's ship looked like.

Diorama: Construct a model of an episode in the Odyssey. You could show Odysseus and his men inside the Cyclop's cave, or Circe changing men into swine, or some other scene you especially enjoyed.

Battle Scene: After doing research into fighting and weapons of this period of history, draw a scene of a battle from the Trojan War. You could also make a model of this scene using clay and other materials.

Costumes: After re-reading Homer and other sources (costume books), show the kinds of clothing that people might have worn. You could draw pictures with captions, dress a doll or an action figure, or make your own clothes to wear. If you are interested in the warriors, you could combine this project with the Battle Scene.

Cartography: Produce a large map of Greece and the eastern Mediterranean Sea, where these adventures took place. You could compare the area as we know it with the world as Homer describes it; take advantage of historical atlases to help your research. If you are exceptionally ambitious, you could make a three-dimensional map of the area; ask for help before starting this.

Posters: Draw and color a series of posters of the key characters, the gods, and selected episodes from these adventures. The posters will be displayed in the classroom upon completion.

Film Animation: Make a short animated film based on one episode. You could make scores of drawings and film them with a single frame camera, or you could do clay animation. Caution: this project will take lots of time to complete.

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Note: One useful way of locating storytellers is *the New England Storytelling Center, Institute for the Arts and Human Development, Lesley College Graduate School, 29 Everett St., Cambridge, MA 02238.*

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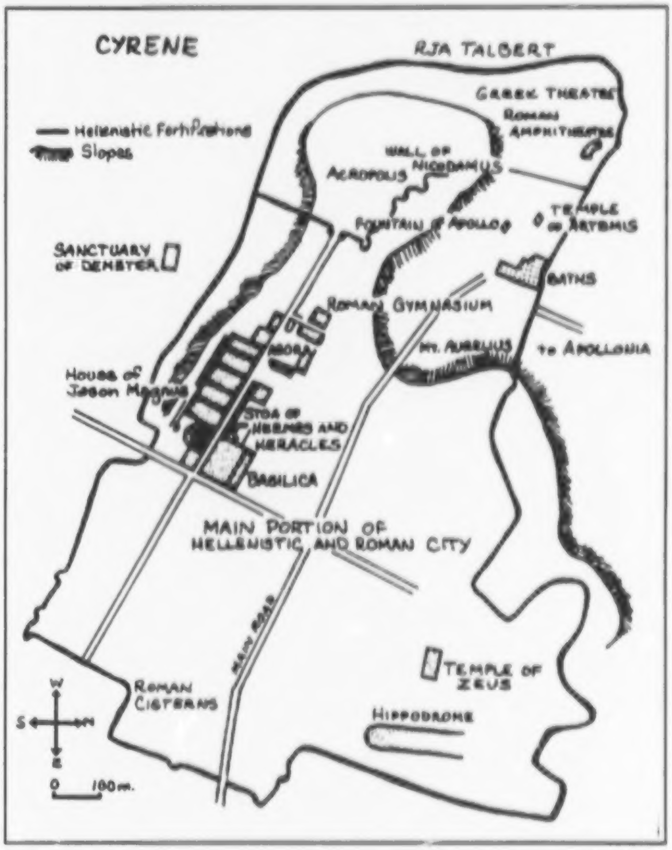
THE POLIS

A UNIT OF STUDY FOR GRADES 6 - 10

By Peter Cheoros
Teacher Associate NCHS



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Linda Symcox, Project Developer & Series Editor
Stanley M. Burstein, Historical Consultant
Charlotte Crabtree, Director

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On the cover: Map of the Greek colony Cyrene. Illustrated by Carole Collier Frick.

THE FOUNDING OF A COLONY

A festive atmosphere surrounded the group of two hundred men as they made their way down the brown hillside to the green-blue waters of the Aegean Sea. They were accompanied by a huge crowd of well-wishers, since each, chosen by lot, represented every family on the island. At the seashore waited the heavily laden ships that would soon take them from the land and city they had always known, to the forbidding shores of northern Africa. Before leaving, solemn oaths were sworn, for these men had committed themselves to a five year venture to found a new polis. Prayers to the gods were offered for a safe journey, final good-byes were said, and then, all too soon, the expedition was on its way.

In the late 7th century B.C., the tiny, crescent-shaped island of Thera was experiencing major problems. Located in the southern Cyclades, near Crete, it had suffered a prolonged period of drought. This problem was compounded by the fact that the population had outstripped the resources of the land. Something had to be done. At this point, a nobleman called Battus had a vision. While his suggestion was probably the result of a careful analysis of the problem, he claimed it came directly from the god Apollo. His solution was simple. Some Theraeans would leave the island and sail to North Africa where they would establish a new city.

Such a move would create a number of problems that needed to be resolved. Foremost of these was how to get people to leave voluntarily. The attachment to the land and the polis was so great that only divine intervention would convince people to leave. Each family would choose one male member by lot who would have to either commit himself to a five year trial as a colonist or die. To further insure that the conscripts remained *loyal to their mission, solemn oaths were exchanged and dire curses pronounced on those who violated their pledge. Thus, in 631 B.C., a band of 200 men set sail from Thera to found a new polis, Cyrene, only one of hundreds of cities to be founded by the ancient Greeks during this period.*

I. UNIT OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

From its shadowy emergence in the eighth century B.C., until its final collapse in the 4th century A.D., the polis, or city-state was the center of ancient Greek life. Literally hundreds of city-states dotted the rugged landscape of the eastern Mediterranean. Under Alexander and his successors, the concept of the polis spread to Egypt, the near east and Fertile Crescent and as far away as the Oxus River, in central Afghanistan. This institution was more than just a mere political or economic unit. No matter how small or humble, to the ancient Greeks it was the center of their world. In many ways it was analogous to our modern nation-state, but on a minute scale. Yet the polis engendered the same feelings of patriotism and fierce devotion as a country does for modern people.

The purpose of this unit is to allow students to understand the function of the polis and its role as an integral part of Greek life. The city-state is frequently viewed in its context as a political organization. Often the political differences were important, and in some cases defined the unique nature of a particular polis. Yet the city-state was also an economic, cultural and social entity, shaped by its history and the unique characteristics of its inhabitants. Another significant concept for students to grasp is that the proliferation of tiny city-states was a constant impediment to the unification of Greece. Like the late Holy Roman Empire, ancient Greece was a geographic expression and not a unified political unit.

II. UNIT CONTEXT

This unit is designed to fit into almost any sequence of your study of Ancient Greece. However, it would be most effective if used at, or near, the beginning of your discussion. Such a placement is particularly important since an understanding of the nature of the polis is vital to a thorough grasp of the entire period. An attempt is made to present a general picture of a polis, but, from a practical point of view, much of the discussion will center on Athens and Sparta, since we have the most complete records involving these cities. The material in the Dramatic Moment can also be used to touch upon the issue of colonization during the Archaic Period. (750-500 B.C.) You may wish to have students refer to the map in the back of the unit so that they can identify the cities mentioned in the lessons.

III. UNIT OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the nature and functions of the ancient Greek polis.

2. To relate the ancient Greek devotion to the polis to present day nationalism.

3. To identify the basic components of a polis.

4. To compare the polis with other forms of political and social organizations previously studied, e.g., Mesopotamia, Egypt.

IV. INTRODUCTION TO THE POLIS

The origins of the polis are shrouded in mystery and beset by controversy, yet a few facts are known. The archaeological record indicates that in the 12th and 11th centuries B.C., the last remnants of the Mycenaean world disappeared. This period, often incorrectly referred to as the Dorian Invasion, saw an end to the old centers of power. Mycenae, Tiryns, Orchomenos, Pylos, and Knossos all ceased to be urban centers. Most importantly, for our study, the art of writing was lost. The next three centuries form the Greek Dark Ages, about which relative little is known. However, in the 8th century, small urban settlements began to appear again and evolved into the numerous polises of the Classical Age.

The geography of the lower Balkan peninsula, with its numerous mountain ranges fostered a sense of isolation and particularism in the people living there. Anyone who has traveled in modern Greece for any distance, can attest to the great difficulty one still encounters in moving about on the land. A result of this physical isolation was that cities were extremely small. Attica, the territory of Athens, the largest of these states, was only three quarters the size of Rhode Island and had a population of about 250,000. The average size of a polis was between 250-500 square miles. Aristotle placed the ideal population of a polis at between 5,000-10,000 citizens. John Fine, in _The Ancient Greeks_, addresses the reasons why the polies were so small and why the people were so committed to them.

> ***"When Greeks settled in these small districts they were organized by institutions based on kinship, real or imagined. Small as each area was, it was sufficient for the limited numbers of settlers and their pastoral and agricul-***

tural ways of life. Generation after generation of people lived in the same way, tending their flocks, cultivating their fields and occasionally being called together to repel some raid from beyond the borders. In these self-sufficient societies a deep love arose for the soil on which life itself was dependent. In these restricted districts, some of which were only a few miles in length and width, the inhabitants became familiar with every natural feature, with every hill and ravine, tree and stream. Shrines and altars to heroes, nymphs, and various vaguely conceived spirits gradually arose, making the land, which was already sacred from the tombs of the ancestors, more holy. And on the acropolis lived the protecting deity or deities of the community, which, although originally the same as the deities of the adjacent communities, gradually acquired distinguishing characteristics.

People living amid these intimate and familiar scenes, generation after generation, must have acquired a sense of belonging which is almost impossible for residents of today's urban monstrosities to understand. Each community developed its own tradition, and special ways of life which were intimately linked with the land and the conviction grew that its ways were better than those of other communities. Thus by the time that increasing population rendered it no longer possible for growing states to be self-sufficient and made it desirable for communities to combine their resources by uniting in larger groups, the inhabitants of each state were so

> ***passionately attached to their city and its lands and traditions that the idea of merging with another state and thus forfeiting part of their identity was unthinkable."***
>
> From John V. A. Fine, The Ancient Greeks, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983.

Thus the polis, as it developed in the Archaic Period was not merely a political or economic unit or a collection of buildings. While all of these elements were significant, in themselves they could not make a city-state. Other intangible considerations, such as interpersonal relationships and the deep attachment to the land made a polis. The ultimate punishment in many city-states was not death, but banishment, which severed all these ties. If you are using the Funeral Oration of Pericles, you may wish to point out to students how Thucydides barely mentions the physical aspect of Athens, but rather stresses the unique nature of its society.

V. LESSON PLANS

1. **The Polis: Organization**

2. **The Polis: Functions**

3. **The Polis: The Beginnings of Nationalism**

4. **Comparing Political/Social Organizations**

THE POLIS: ORGANIZATION

A. Objective

1. To identify the basic components of a polis.

A Note to the Teacher

During this discussion encourage students to think about why these particular elements were important and how they compare and contrast with cities that they know.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Distribute **DOCUMENT A** which provides background and vocabulary on Greek city life as well as a plan of the Acropolis.

2. Referring to the plan of the Acropolis, discuss the four aspects of a city-state.

3. In order to begin to understand the polis, it is necessary that students have a grasp of the various elements which were part of its organization. In this lesson, four aspects of city life are identified: physical setting, political structure, social classes and economic organization. While it is impossible in a few short lessons to cover all the complexities of Greek city life, the student resource can form the basis for a discussion of the broad outlines of a polis.

C. Evaluating the Lesson

1. Check for understanding during the discussion. Re-evaluate these observations after **LESSON TWO**.

2. Check logs created by students.

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT A

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE POLIS

Physical Setting

No matter how large or small, all Greek cities shared certain common public buildings. Civic life was centered in and around these structures. A few of the more important of these were:

- *Acropolis*: "High city", was the fortress of the city. As its name implies, it was usually located on high ground and could offer refuge to the people in times of danger. The most famous of these is that of Athens.
- *Agora*: The market place, located near the acropolis, was the center of city life. Here farmers and city dwellers met on market days to transact business, socialize and gossip.
- *Bouleterion*: While not always called by this name, every city had some form of governmental buildings often located in or near the agora.
- *Gymnasium*: Sports, which to the Greeks were a preparation for war, as well as a religious rite, were so important that every polis had some form of athletic facility.
- *Temple*: Every Greek city had a patron deity that was the center of local worship. In some places, such as Delphi, this building seems to have preceded the polis. Larger cities would have temples to other gods as well, but civic religion was always focused on the patron deity.
- *Theater*: By the Classical period, only Athens had a theater for religious pageants and secular entertainment.

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT A

Political System

The ancient Greeks experimented with numerous political systems. The following list includes some of the more common types. However, even when cities had the same basic form of government, there were always local variations. To further confuse the matter, some polies used a mixture of two or more forms, i.e. the Spartan Constitution contained elements that were democratic, oligarchical and monarchical.

- *Aristocracy*: (rule by the "best"): A government made up of a hereditary nobility who were believed superior to others because of their birth.
- *Democracy*: (rule by the "people"): A government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly or indirectly. In the polis, only male citizens could vote.
- *Monarchy*: (rule by one): A government having an hereditary chief of state with life tenure and powers varying from absolute to nominal. By the end of the Archaic period most kings had disappeared or had their powers severely reduced.
- *Oligarchy* (rule by the few): A government in which a small group of people exercise control, often for their own purposes.
- *Tyranny*: In ancient Greece a tyrant was anyone who seized power and ruled with little or no restraint on his power. It did not have the same negative meaning as it does today.

Social Classes

Here again, the ancient Greeks showed a genius for devising all types of social systems. Within cities there was always some tension between classes, *stasis*, which could, and often did, turn violent.

- *Citizens*: This term meant anyone born of parents who were citizens of the polis. Usually citizens were formed into kinship groups, sometimes called tribes. While both men and women were counted as citizens, only men exercised political power. The major fighting force of the city, the *hoplies*, were drawn from this class. In rare cases, a foreigner might be made a citizen.

- *Resident Aliens (Metics)*: These could be non-Greeks or people from another polis. Their position in the city was often precarious. They came for a variety of reasons, the two most common being trade and banishment. Sometimes, as in Athens, they formed a relatively large percentage of the population. Sparta, on the other hand virtually banned resident aliens.

- *Slaves*: The slave population varied in size from city to city. Slaves were acquired in a number of ways, the most common being capture in war, purchase, or punishment for crimes. Slaves were often non-Greek, usually from the north, the Crimea or Anatolia. There is virtually no evidence for the use of Africans as slaves in classical Greece.

Economic System

The ideal for a polis was a self-sufficient economy. The land was supposed to produce everything that its people needed. However this was rarely the case. All cities engaged in some form of trade with their neighbors.

- *Farmers*: The vast majority of people earned their livelihood by farming. These farms ran the gamut from small holdings which barely kept their owner and his family alive, to huge estates operated by tenants and/or slaves. In most cities owners of land were held in the highest esteem.

- *Craftsmen*: The size and function of this group also varied from city to city, as did their social standing. In almost every case they were individuals who produced whatever the people could not make for themselves.

STUDENT RESOURCE: DOCUMENT A

Merchants: A small proportion of every city's population was engaged in some form of trade. This might mean only a trip to the next polis, or organized trading ventures which ranged as far away as the Crimean peninsula in the Black Sea to the Straits of Gibraltar. The prosperity of cities such as Corinth, Athens and Syracuse were based on foreign trade.

THE POLIS: FUNCTIONS

A. Objective

1. To understand the nature and functions of the ancient Greek polis.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Begin the lesson by referring students to the **DRAMATIC MOMENT**.
   a. Then ask students, *"If you were the Theraean just arriving in Africa, how would you go about creating a city?"*
2. Divide the class into four or five groups. They are then to review the material from yesterday's discussion, and begin to create their own version of Cyrene.
   a. They should begin by making a city plan and locating on it all the public buildings. They are then free to make decisions regarding what form of government they want, what the mixture of social classes will be and what type of economic system they would like.
   b. When they have completed their task, each group will present its conclusions to the class. (Students may do this in writing if you wish to reduce the time spent in class on this activity). However, whatever method they employ, students must be able to give reasons for their choices.

Note to the Teacher

Remind students that they are compressing history here. Colonies would be much more primitive as they started out, just as the original English colonies did not mirror English society.

C. Evaluating the Lesson

This will be done by grading students' oral or written presentations.

THE POLIS: THE BEGINNINGS OF NATIONALISM

A. Objective

1. To relate the ancient Greek devotion to the polis to present-day nationalism.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Begin the lesson by placing the following quote by the historian Herodotus (484-428 B.C.) on the board:

> ***"For if anyone, no matter who, were given the opportunity of choosing from amongst all the nations in the world the sets of beliefs which he thought best, he would, inevitably, after careful consideration of their relative merits, choose those of his own country." (Herodotus, Book 3:38)***

   a. Ask students if they believe this statement to be true. If so, how would this account for the numerous variety of polies.

   b. Then see if they can make any parallels with the ancient Greek World and the world today.

   c. Have someone list on the board the barriers that exist today which keep nations from combining. How are these similar/different from those of the ancient Greek world? You may wish to use this as a topic for a debate.

C. Evaluating the Lesson

Observation and grading of student participation in the discussion.

LESSON FOUR

COMPARING POLITICAL/SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS

A. Objective

1. To compare the polis with other forms of political/social organizations previously studied, e.g., Mesopotamia, Egypt.

B. Lesson Activities

Note to the Teacher

The procedure for the lesson is similar to that of **LESSON THREE**, and may be combined with that lesson plan. If you are short of time, this could become an individual or group assignment to be done outside of class.

1. Have students construct a chart using the four elements studied in **LESSONS ONE** and **TWO**.

2. Then have them list the various civilizations that you have previously studied. From this chart students should be able to find similarities and differences with the Greek polis. Use the "Teacher's Chart Guide" to aid you in the assignment.

C. Evaluating the Lesson

Observation of class discussion and/or grading of charts. The following is an example of some of the items that students may place on their charts.

TEACHER'S CHART GUIDE

Place the following on the board:

	Greece	Egypt	Mesopotamia
Physical Setting			
Political Systems			
Social Classes			
Economic System			

Sample finished chart:

	Greece	Egypt	Mesopotamia
Physical Setting	rough mountains and islands	River valley	River valley
Political Systems	see examples Lesson One	God-king	God-king
Social Classes	see examples Lesson One	King & noble priests peasants slaves	King & noble priests merchants peasants slaves
Economic System	see examples Lesson One	agriculture	agriculture, trade

THE CYRENE FOUNDATION OATH

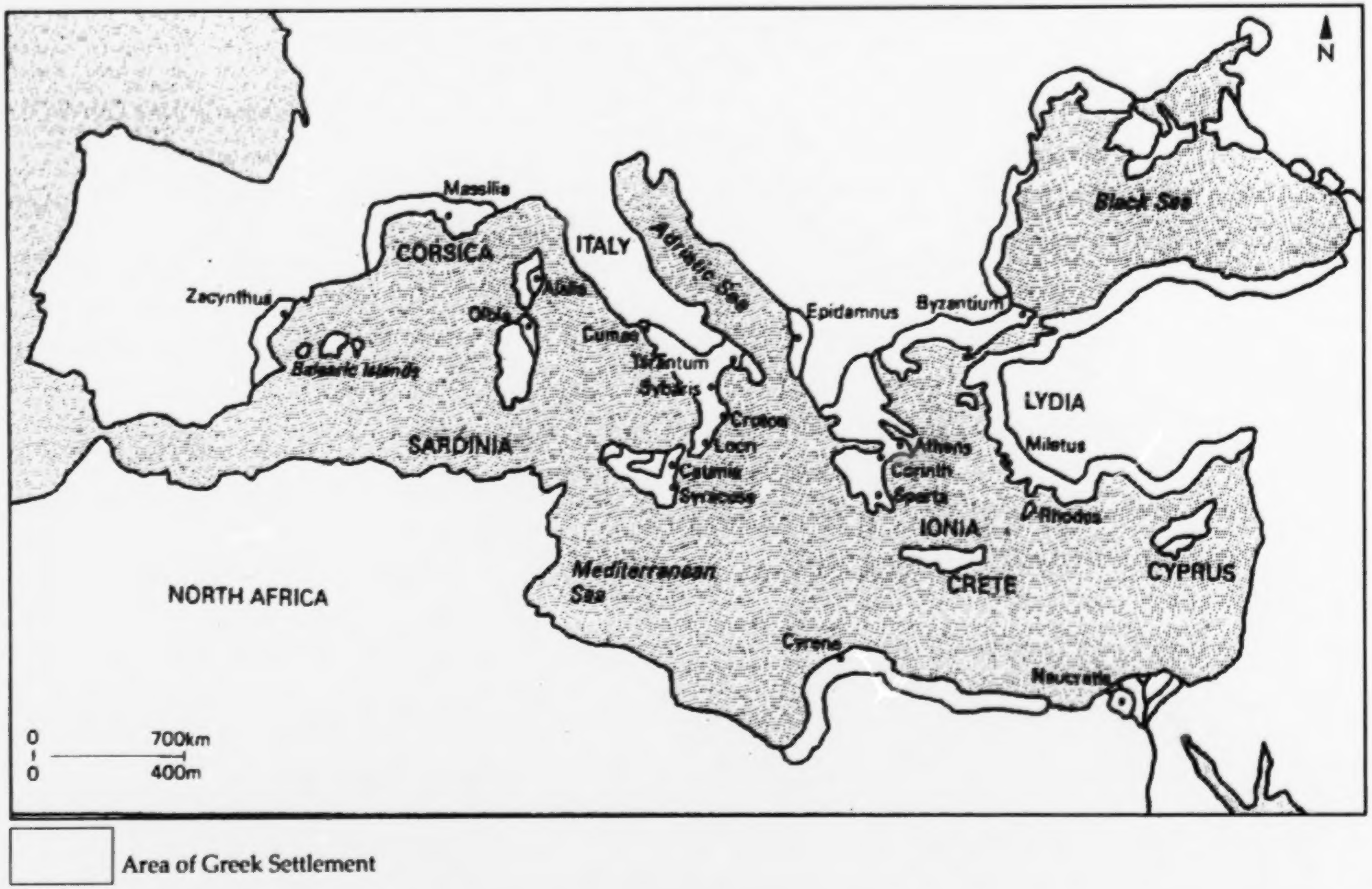
Translated by Stanley M. Burstein

[Oath of the Colonists.]

Resolved by the Assembly. Since Apollo spontaneously told Battus and the Theraeans to found a colony in Cyrene, the Theraeans decided to sail away to Libya with Battus as the leader of the colony and king; and the Theraeans shall sail as comrades. They shall sail and from the rest of the Theraeans any free man who wishes may sail.

If the colonists secure the settlement, any colonist who sails later to Libya shall have a share in the citizenship and honors and shall receive a lot from the unassigned land. But if they do not secure the settlement, and the Theraeans cannot go to their aid and they suffer troubles for five years, they may return from the land without fear to Thera to their own property and become citizens. Whoever is unwilling to sail when sent by the city, let him be subject to the death penalty and let his property be confiscated. He who receives or protects such a person, whether a father his son or a brother his brother, he shall suffer the same punishment as the person who refused to sail. On these terms oaths were sworn by those remaining here and those sailing to found the colony and they cursed those who transgressed these conditions and did not abide by them, either those settling in Libya or those staying here. They formed wax images and burned them while they uttered these words, all of them together, men and women, boys and girls. Anyone who does not abide by these oaths but transgresses them, let him melt and flow away just as these images, he and his seed and his property. But may there be many things and those good ones to those who abide by these oaths, both those sailing to Libya and those remaining in Thera, themselves and their seed.

GREEK COLONIES, CA.550 B.C.



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